

# EVIDENCES

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OF

## REVEALED RELIGION.

*The writers were*

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By MENDON ASSOCIATION,  
(MASSACHUSETTS.)

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*Nathaniel Emmons of Franklin.  
Caleb Alexander of Mendon.  
John Crane of Northbridge.*

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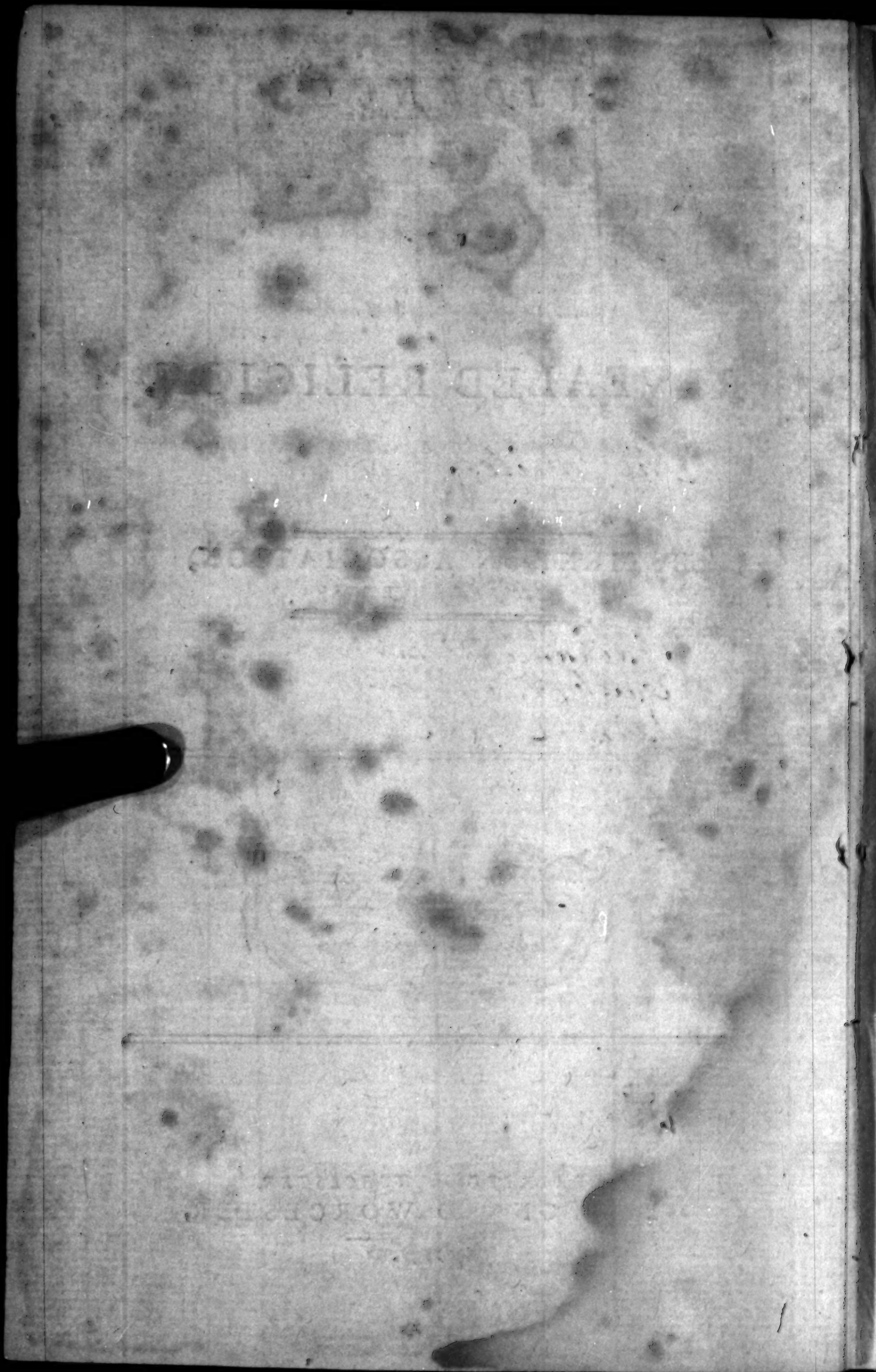
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PRINTED AT WORCESTER,  
By LEONARD WORCESTER.

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1797.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

*MENDON ASSOCIATION, at their flat-  
ed Meeting, in October, 1796, taking into consideration  
the increasing prevalence of infidelity, and the uncommon  
exertions of many to prejudice the minds of people against  
revealed religion, considered it their duty to unite in their  
endeavors to check the progress of sentiments so fatal to the  
souls of men, and injurious to society. And, though they  
might not be able to offer any thing new, upon subjects,  
which have been treated, with great ability, by ancient and  
modern writers ; yet, they entertained a hope, that they  
could offer something, which might be useful, in the present  
day, more especially to those, who have not access to larger  
publications. Impressed with these views, they submit the  
following pages to an impartial public, in hope they may  
afford assistance to all inquirers after truth.*

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EVIDENCES

Rev. C. Alexander.

Rev. A. Cameron.

J. J. Crane



# EVIDENCES

OF

## REVEALED RELIGION.

### CHAPTER I.

*The Evidence in Favor of Revealed Religion, arising from its Necessity and Importance to Mankind.*



BELIEVING, that the light of nature, and the intelligent powers of men, are sufficient for all the purposes of religion, Deists reject a particular revelation, as altogether needless. Nature, they say, is a sure guide in all the walks of piety; and man needs no other instructor, they affirm, than the voice of nature, to direct him through the journey of life, and to bring him safely to the regions of bliss. And, of course, they highly extol the light of nature, and the rational powers of man, and exert all their ability, wit, and ratiocination, to depreciate the Bible, and to make people believe it is an imposition on their good understanding.

Passing over the bold assertions and vain triumphs of infidels, it is very plain, that they have but a slight acquaintance with the heart of man, his passions, inclinations, prejudices, and selfishness, by which he is grossly blinded and turned aside from the line of duty. In all their remarks upon religion, these men take it, as a given point, that the heart of man is pure, that his intentions are innocent, and his



his feelings, in general, right. And they, hence, conclude, that he needs not a particular revelation to teach him the character of God, and the religious and social duties he owes his Creator and fellow creatures. Should it be granted, for the sake of argument, that man is not the subject of depravity; that his heart is pure and clean; that he still retains that state of innocence and rectitude, in which the first man was created; yet, it would not be a certain consequence, that he needs not a revelation to make known to him the will and pleasure of his Maker, and many duties owing to his neighbors. In a state of sinless perfection, man, it is granted, might reason, from the works of creation and providence, that God is great, and powerful, and wise, and benevolent, and that he ought to love a being, so glorious and munificent. But should the question be asked him, in what way he must render this love? In what manner God is to be worshipped by him? His lips would be closed in silence; he could not make a pertinent reply. For, although the light of nature may exhibit, to an holy being, the attributes of the eternal God, yet it does not teach the form, or manner, in which dependent beings are bound to worship him. And, accordingly, we find, that there were divine communications between heaven and earth, that God appeared and conversed with our first parents, before their fall. And, according to the Bible, the holy angels are represented as desiring to look into the scheme of redemption.

It cannot be granted, however, that man is, now, in a state of innocence, or that he has been in a state of innocence, at any time, as far back, as we have any evidence of his character and conduct, from the most early histories. From the first rise of civil societies and kingdoms, the page of history has been faithful in recording the evil passions and immoral conduct of man. The history of man is a history of murder, assassination, massacre, robbery, theft, perjury, injustice, tyranny, intemperance, debauchery, pride, and ambition. These are sins. And they are such sins as prove, that man is in a fallen state; that he is not an innocent being; that his affections are very wicked; and that he is, in fact, a rebel against God, and the enemy of righteousness. To deny, that man is depraved, that he is inclined to every evil passion, is to confess one's ignorance of human nature.

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nature. So many and so forcible are the arguments to prove the amazing wickedness of Adam's race, that one may as well deny any sentiment of religion, as this. And from this wickedness, it is easy to conceive, will arise false notions of God, of his character, law, and government. From this source have flowed all the errors, superstition, impiety, and idolatry, that have existed in the world. And from this principle we may safely argue *the need and importance of a particular revelation* to instruct man in duty, and to animate his heart with the encouragements of religion.

To prove and illustrate this truth shall be our present task. In doing this, let it be observed,

1. That without a particular revelation, men could not know, that God would forgive their sins.

Being sensible of their wickedness, and the miseries to which they are consequently exposed, in this life, they might form conjectures and surmises about another world, as being either a state of happiness, or misery. And they might ardently desire to be released from the punishment, justly due to their sins. But their desires would be attended with doubt and perplexities, which would damp all their hopes, and fill them with the keenest distress, whenever they seriously reflected on their unhappy state. From the voice of nature, it is plain, they could receive no relief. For nature exhibits no certain, conclusive, evidence, that God will pardon transgressors. It may teach, that he is wise, and powerful, and beneficent. But it does not teach, that is his pleasure and determination respecting sinners, and the punishment due to sin. As God suffers men to be sinful, in this life, and to endure pain and misery, so he may suffer this to be the condition of sinning man, during eternity. At least, neither the light of nature, nor the reasoning powers of the human mind, are sufficient to prove, to a certainty, which leaves no room for doubt, that God will forgive the transgressions of his creatures, and receive them into his favor.

To one believing and defending the innocence of man, these remarks will appear inconsistent and ridiculous. But, as the evidence of human depravity has ever been clear; as the wickedness of man has been apparent among all nations, and all ages; as *O the times! O the manners!* has been



been the common exclamation of poets, historians, and orators ; so we may safely conclude, that the human heart is very corrupt, that sins must be forgiven, or men will be miserable, and that there is no help nor hope, for men, but in the mere sovereign pleasure and mercy of God. But whether or not God will be merciful, is a question, that cannot be resolved by the voice of nature, nor the reasoning faculties of man.

That sins must be forgiven, in order that man may be happy, is evident from the religious rites and ceremonies, which have been, and still are, prevalent among the heathen. In their sacrifices and oblations, the heathen ever acted upon the principle that their gods were offended with them, and that something ought to be done to appease their anger. Hence, they built temples, instituted religious service, appointed sacrifices, and a long train of ceremonies. That the gods were to be appeased by the offering of victims, appears to have been the current opinion of the heathen world. For the practice of expiating sins, by sacrifices, was prevalent, not only among the poor, but among the rich ; not only among the ignorant, but among the learned and wise. And this affords conclusive evidence, that the heathen believed their sins must be forgiven, in order to their happiness.

But their sacrifices and expiations were impious and barbarous, to the highest degree. From the nature of their sacrifices, it is manifest, that they were extremely ignorant of the true character of God, and that they knew nothing of the rational, consistent mode, of obtaining pardon from him. And, hence, appears the need of a particular revelation from heaven, to teach them the true character of God ; to teach them, that he is disposed to forgive sin ; and to teach them the mode, in which sin may be forgiven.

Many of the ancient philosophers acknowledged, that, till God should reveal himself, in some extraordinary manner, it would be impossible to know, what religious service would be most acceptable to him. And, of course, they must have been entirely ignorant of his determinations, in regard to sinners. To men, thus conscious of their ignorance, and wandering about in perplexity and fear, a revelation from God must have been very welcome. But, to infidels of the present age, this revelation is not *glad tidings of great joy*.

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The light of nature, they are confident, is sufficient to guide them in the right way. They have no anxiety about their sins. They feel no danger of coming wrath; and they seem to be as unconcerned about their future existence, as the beasts of the field. To prove the need of a particular revelation, it may be observed,

2. That the light of nature gives no knowledge of a Redeemer.

Whatever perfections of God are discoverable by the light of nature, it is, if we mistake not, a given point, that nature affords no knowledge of a Redeemer. How highly soever infidels may extol the voice of nature, and the abilities of man, yet they presume not to say, that from these sources can be derived any knowledge, or intimation, that God has provided a Savior for sinful man. Should we search the volume of nature, with the most critical nicety, and examine what are called the common providences of God, we could gain no evidence from them, that God has an only begotten and well beloved Son, and that this Son has been appointed the Savior of men, and sent into this world to work out redemption for them.

To revelation, therefore, must we appeal for this comfortable knowledge. And, accordingly, we behold, in the Bible, the character of the Redeemer unfolding itself to view. By an express revelation, God has been pleased to teach men, that he has an only begotten Son; that he has sanctified and sent him into the world; that he made a covenant with him for the redemption of apostate man; that this Son of God has appeared, established a pure religion, suffered, died, and risen for the justification of men, and ascended into heaven to appear as an intercessor before the throne of grace.

These truths are plainly revealed in the Bible, and they are truths, which are not taught, in any way, but by a particular revelation. If God condescend to grant unto man a particular revelation, we may expect to find in it some important doctrines, that could not, possibly, be ascertained by the light of nature. For, if the light of nature were of itself sufficient to guide men, in the way of truth, then there would be no necessity of a particular manifestation of the divine will, by an audible voice from on high, or by dreams, visions, signs, miracles, or prophecy. And as we hope to



make evident, in the course of this subject, that the Bible is the word of God, given to men, by the particular inspiration of the Almighty; so we shall find it has manifested to view the character of a Savior, his ministry, preaching, religion, and what he did to lay a foundation for the pardon of sinners. These are the leading truths of the Bible: And they are doctrines, of which nature is entirely ignorant.

If men are sinners; if it be of any importance to them to obtain the pardon, of their sins; if the sure knowledge, that God is willing to pardon, on certain conditions, can yield them any comfort; if it be important to know the mode in which pardon is conveyed, and the character of that divine person, for whose sake pardon is granted to the penitent, then, that men greatly need a particular revelation, is a plain undeniable truth.

To evade this conclusion, Deists must say, that repentance alone is sufficient to lay a foundation for pardon. How does this appear? What evidence have they, either from the works of creation or providence, that God will pardon the sinner, on condition he repents? To challenge them to produce this evidence, to shew what it is, and wherein it consists, is not assuming a haughty tone. If there be any evidence of this kind, they can, undoubtedly, bring it to view. And it must be such evidence, as will give complete satisfaction, and remove from the mind every doubt and scruple. Of this nature we can find satisfactory evidence, in the Bible. But we cannot find it, in any arguments, or conjectures, or suppositions, of infidel writers. And these gentlemen ought to know, that the soul, oppressed with the burden of sin, and longing to be free of its guilt, cannot rest satisfied, in any thing, short of absolute certainty. And none of them, it is believed, will pretend, that their scheme can yield a knowledge, or certainty, which will banish all anxiety and doubt from the mind.

Considering men as guided wholly by the light of nature, as knowing nothing of the Redeemer and salvation through his righteousness, it may be asked, on what foundation is their religion built? They have hopes, it will be said, of pardon and eternal life beyond the grave. But what is the foundation of their hopes? Are their hopes built on their innocence, or obedience, or repentance? Who among men

is innocent? Who is perfectly obedient? None will pretend, that men, in their present state, are perfect beings, or that they render to God the obedience, which is justly due. On what principle, then, is mercy to be extended to them? What claim has a transgressor to the mercy of God? Will the light of nature support and vindicate this claim? What title, in the nature of things, have sinners, to either present, or future, happiness? The highest probability, at which the light of nature can arrive, in this case, is, that, considering the compassion of the Creator, and the infirmity of men, God may take pity on them, and accept their endeavors, notwithstanding all their failings. But even this probability is not built on a sure and certain foundation. For, if a compassionate God may righteously suffer his creatures to experience misery, in this world, he may also righteously bring misery on them, in the coming world.

Should it be granted, that repentance alone is a sufficient foundation for pardon: Yet, it may be said, that impunity mere forgiveness, is not the thing, which nature craves. "The eyes of men," says Bishop Sherlock, "are looking to immortality. Their desires are stretching to immortality. And they wish for something more, than these slender, these insufficient expectations, that are founded on mere conjecture. But the argument for divine mercy, when built on the simple religion of nature, cannot reach beyond mere probability, beyond a mere conjecture of what may take place."

To men destitute of the Bible and trusting in natural religion, repentance is their only shelter from divine wrath. But repentance, at best, is a feeble, uncertain, place of security against punishment. For, natural religion yields no absolute certainty, that repentance is available to pardon, that an holy God will forgive sinners, on condition they do repent. But, from the revelation, which God has been pleased to give of himself and of his Son, the Redeemer, we have the most sure and animating evidence, that our repentance will not be in vain. In the Bible, we are plainly told, that *he, who repenteth and believeth, shall be forgiven.* The Bible informs, that, by our repentance, we shall obtain forgiveness of God, through the righteousness of his Son, who is the Mediator between God and man. By receiving the Bible,



as the word of God, and cordially complying with the terms of salvation it holds out to their acceptance, men will be freed from wandering in the mazes and labyrinths of human reason, and from contemplating the perfections of Deity through the dim light of nature. The Bible unfolds to our view the benevolent and immutable determination of God to grant, for the sake of his Son, pardon and eternal life, to all classes of men, who sincerely repent of their sins, and return to their Maker with a broken heart. This is a most important, animating truth. And, as it is not discoverable by the light of nature ; but is made known to men by the gospel, we may, hence, learn the need of a particular revelation to teach this truth. Having advanced thus far in the subject, we observe,

3. That the light of nature is insufficient to teach men the whole of moral duty.

To examine what the light of nature has done, in teaching men the duties they owe to God and one another, is a fair way of finding out what it can do. In ancient times, when revealed religion was confined wholly to the posterity of Abraham, and before Christianity was published through the world, men were entirely under the direction of the light of nature, in all their religious inquiries. In order, therefore, to have a fair trial of the ability of the light of nature, we must go back to these ancient times, and examine the religious state of the world, and the sentiments of morality prevalent among men. If the unassisted powers of nature were then sufficient to shew men the whole of moral duty, to teach them the nature of virtue and vice, and the difference between right and wrong, and to exhibit all the beauties of virtue, and all the deformities of vice, it is probable, that we shall find some nations, or cities, or sects of men, or individual persons, who understood the true nature of morality, in all its ramifications, and put it into practice. But, if no such persons, nor societies, can be found, then it will be fair reasoning to say, that the light of nature was not sufficient to teach them the whole of moral duty.

And, that we may not be taxed with partiality, or unfairness, in this examination, our inquiry shall not be confined to the wandering Tartars, nor Arabians, nor to the rude unpolished nations in the north of Europe, nor to the lower classes of people,

people, in any nation. But we will confine ourselves to those nations where learning flourished, and where all the arts of civilized life were cultivated and carried to a very high state of perfection. And, that every objection of unfitness may be removed, we will select, from among these civilized nations, a few of their first characters, men celebrated for their virtue and philosophy. For these men, if any, were surely able to examine the powers of nature, to search out all the truths, taught by the light of nature, and teach them to others.

But the best philosophers and moralists, among the heathen, acknowledged their ignorance, in some points of duty. They were not even agreed, among themselves, what, in many instances, was virtue and vice. Varro, an ancient philosopher, observes, that among the great men of the heathen world, there were not less than two hundred and eighty opinions concerning that one question, what was the chief good, or final happiness, of man. They often called evil good; and good they called evil; they put darkness for light, and light, for darkness. And what of moral duty they did know, they had not power to enforce upon the common people, who, in those times, were extremely ignorant.

Of all the heathen philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Seneca, were the most famous; and they said many excellent things about the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments due to the virtuous and vicious, in the next state of being. But many of their doctrines were so wrapped up in mysticism and similitudes, that they were far beyond the comprehension of the vulgar. To the great reproach of these philosophers, it is a fact, that, in public, they taught one sentiment, and, in their private schools, its opposite. And, of course, they were men unsuitable to enlighten the world, and inculcate the principles of true morality.

That all virtue consisted in pleasure, that it was perfectly right for men to gratify every inclination and passion of their souls and bodies, was the doctrine of Epicurus and his disciples. And, hence, in the opinion of these moralists, revenge, selfishness, intemperance, and debauchery, were no crimes: For, by indulging themselves in these things, they only gratified their inclinations, and enjoyed the pleasures for which they were made. Instead of instructing the mind and



and reforming the heart, these doctrines were a curse to society ; and they lead to atheism, both in theory and practice.

The Stoics, another sect of philosophers, founded, at Athens, by the celebrated Zeno, did not teach a system of morality much superior to that of the Epicureans. They taught, that men ought to feel equally indifferent to pleasure or pain, to adversity or prosperity, and that to be stretched on a rack, or to repose on a bed of roses, are, to a wise man, matters of equal indifference. They taught, " that a wise man ought never to be influenced by favors, nor ever to pardon an offence ; that it is an argument of weakness and folly to be softened by sentiments of compassion ; that a truly manly character is equally inaccessible to entreaties and prayers ; that every offence is a mortal sin ; that he, who smothered a cock without necessity, is no less guilty than the man, who smothered his father ; that the wise man never doubts, never repents, is never deceived, and never changes his mind ; and that to alter one's sentiments, is shameful ; to yield to prayers and entreaties, a crime ; and to be compassionate, a scandalous weakness."\*

From the sentiments of the Stoics, it clearly follows, that no injury is done to a wise man, by robbing him of his money, by cutting off his arm, or leg, by murdering his friend, or stealing his child. For no crime is committed ; nothing is taken from him of any value ; nothing, at the loss of which he ought to repine. These philosophers taught, it is true, submission to the divine will ; but they also taught, that a man had a right to take away his own life, when, and how he pleased. In this they followed the sentiment and example of Zeno, their founder, who, in a pet, hanged himself, because he hurt his finger.† The general scheme of morality, taught by these philosophers, is as far removed from the truth, as light is from darkness.

Seneca taught the immortality of the soul. But he also taught, that men, at death, are reduced to nothing, and that the tranquillity of the dead is the same as the tranquillity of those, who are not born. He taught, that when we die, we are reduced to the elements, from whence we came, and lose all personal existence ; that there is no future punishment

\* Cicero's Oration for Murena, Sec. xxx, xxxi. p. 262—264, Duncan's translation.

† See Dr. Beattie's Evidence, who refers to Diogenes Laertius,

ment of the vicious, nor rewards for the virtuous; and that it is of no consequence, whether we exist, or not, after this life is done. The same philosophy inculcated the sentiment, that pity and compassion are unbecoming men; that we ought not to grieve at any calamities, that may befall others; and that to console them, in any of their afflictions, is acting unworthy of the character of wise men.

Let it, now, be determined, whether or not the light of nature be sufficient to teach men the whole of moral duty. The philosophers, whose sentiments on morality we have rehearsed, enjoyed all the advantages of antiquity; they lived among the most polite and learned nations; they were favored with all the sentiments of their predecessors; and, yet with all these helps, they were not able to form a consistent system of morality. They were unable to enlighten and reform either themselves, or others, in point of religious knowledge. Will a system, which teaches, that all happiness consists in sensual gratification, be likely to correct the evil habits of men, and to lay a suitable restraint on all their unruly passions and inclinations? Will a system, like that of the Stoics, which directs men to be absolutely indifferent about good and evil, be likely to stimulate them in the path of virtue? In every view of the subject, the doctrines of the heathen philosophers were insufficient to effect a reformation, either in faith or practice. Their systems were designed as subjects of amusement and disputation, rather than of instructing and amending the heart. The greater part of those, whom antiquity honored with the name of philosophers, were men of loose principles and corrupt lives. Many of them disgraced human reason, by their vicious doctrines and sophistical wrangling; and some, by their debauchery, impudence, and bestiality. These are not our assertions. They are the sentiments of Lactantius, Cicero, and Aristotle.

Since neither the common people, nor the philosophers of antiquity, had a consistent plan of morality; since they believed in many dangerous and corrupt sentiments; and since they were, in general, men of debauched lives, it clearly follows, that the light of nature was an insufficient guide, and that they greatly needed a particular revelation, a divine teacher from heaven, to teach them their duty.

Whatever



Whatever may be the vain boastings of modern infidels, about the sufficiency of Nature's light, and the absurdity of believing, that God has taught men, in a supernatural way ; that is, by a particular revelation, by sending unto them prophets, and his own Son, and holy apostles ; yet, the best and wisest of heathen philosophers ever confessed their ignorance, and often expressed their earnest desires, that a divine messenger would come, from heaven, to be their instructor. "Ye may give over," said Socrates, "all hopes of amending men's lives, for the future, unless God be pleased to send some other person to instruct you."\* To this we may add the testimony of Plato : "Whatever," said he, "is set right and as it should be, in the present evil state of the world, can be so *only* by the *particular interposition* of God."\* And yet modern infidels pretend to be better acquainted with the religious state of the ancient heathen nations, than these great philosophers. The best men of antiquity were anxious of receiving a divine teacher from heaven ; and infidels of the present age are as anxious to vilify and traduce his character and religion, now that the Son of God has come, and *preached righteousness, in the great congregation*. Contrary to the conviction and declarations of the wisest and most virtuous moralists of antiquity, modern freethinkers say, that men need not a revelation to teach them any moral duty whatever. Can it be, that men, who talk in this strain, have any acquaintance with the state of the world, antecedently to the coming and preaching of the Son of God ? Can it be, that they have, ever, read with care, the writings of heathen poets and philosophers, and learned what doctrines they taught, and how incapable they were of leading men, in the path of righteousness, and conducting them to glory hereafter ? Are these men desirous of reverting back to heathenism, to the impure and obscene worship of idols, and to the debauched morals of antiquity ? They may say, perhaps, We know more of moral duty, than the heathen ever did. But from what source have they obtained this knowledge ? Is the light of nature more clear, than formerly ? Are the powers of nature more acute, vigilant, and penetrating, than formerly ? Are the intellects of men more sagacious and discerning ? To the gospel,

\* See the Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion, by Dr. S. Clarke ; in Watson's Tracts, p. 205, vol. iv.

pel, which has been the happy means of spreading light around the world, they are indebted, it is certain, for a more perfect and clear view, which they have of God, and the duties they owe him and one another. What infidels call natural religion, is, in a great measure, as Rousseau confesses, derived from that very scripture, which they despise and reject with disdain.

When the Son of God appeared, he taught a system of piety and morality, which as much excels the morality of Confucius, of Zoroaster, of Socrates, of Plato, of Seneca, and Epictetus, as the meridian sun excels the faint glimmerings of a taper. The religion of Christ purifies the heart; instructs the ignorant; unites men together in the bands of love; weans their affections from this world; animates them with the hope of unfading glory; forbids injustice, malice, debauchery, and covetousness; and inculcates purity of heart, chastity of conduct, and every virtue ornamental to human nature, happifying to man as an individual, and beneficial to society. The religion of Christ, believed and practised, will guide a man, in safety, through this world, and prepare him for heaven. We observe,

4. That the light of nature is insufficient to teach the whole of God's moral character, and to shew in what manner he is to be worshipped.

On what principle shall we account for the polytheism of the ancients, if we grant that the light of nature be a guide sufficient to teach the whole of God's character, and the worship, that is due to him alone? In this age of the world, we have clear conviction, that there is but one God, and that he alone is the object of worship. But our advantages are superior to those of the ancient heathens. Deists think, that, from the works of creation and providence, it may be clearly known, there is only one God. But the heathen enjoyed all the knowledge arising from the works of creation and providence, and yet they held to a multiplicity of gods, and their worship was, in the highest degree, absurd and impious. And this idolatry spread, not only among the ignorant and barbarous nations, but among the enlightened and civilized. And, that learning and civilization did not cure men of their idolatry, and inspire them with just sentiments of God, and the worship due to him, is apparent,



from the sentiments and practice of the Grecians and Romans, who, of all the ancient nations, were the wisest and most refined. As they increased in riches, dominion, and literature, so they increased in multiplying gods, in building temples, and adding to their obscene and impious rites. As their gods were, generally, departed heroes, whom they deified after death, so their characters were a mixture of every thing, that is base, contentious, and vicious. In the words of Mr. Pope, they made,

“ Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,  
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust ;  
Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,  
And form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.”

Their Jupiter was a debauchee ; Venus, a prostitute ; Juno, a scold ; Hercules, a swaggerer ; Mars, a braggadocio ; Neptune, a profane, seafaring captain ; and Bacchus, a drunkard. These are high charges ; but they are supported by the history of the heathen gods, written by Homer, Virgil, and other ancient poets.

Admitting the writers of the Bible to have been versed in the heathen mythology, it is manifest, that the nations of the world, in a short time, after the flood, became vain in their imaginations, and that their foolish hearts were, soon, darkened. They professed themselves to be wise, but became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. They worshipped gods, who presided over mountains, hills, plains, valleys, trees, and fields of corn ; over seas, rivers, brooks, and lakes ; they worshipped not only the virtues of men, but all the vices and corruptions of the human heart ; they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars ; they worshipped oxen, serpents, and toads. As was the character of their gods, such was the worship instituted to them. Venus was worshipped by prostitution ; Bacchus, by intemperance ; and Moloch, by sacrificing human victims to his rage. The killing of men and women, and offering them in sacrifice to appease the anger of their gods, was no uncommon sight, in the days of Paganism. “ To give you an account of the religion and divinity of the vulgar, in the days of heathenism,” says Bishop Sherlock, “ would be to entertain you with an history of folly and superstition, some parts of which, for the barbarity

barity of them, and some for the lewdness of them, are very unfit to be related, in a christian congregation. The people thought of their gods much after the rate that the old poets wrote of them ; and their sacred history was only a narration of the battles and quarrels, and loves and amours of their deities. Their practice, in religion, was agreeable to their articles of belief. Their impure deities were worshipped in acts of impurity ; and their cruel deities, by acts of cruelty."

By this history of their gods, and their sentiments of their gods, and the absurd and impure worship paid to them, we may see, that the being and perfections of the true God, and the pure and holy worship due to him, were much obscured; if not wholly obliterated, in the heathen world. And, from hence, we may learn the necessity of a particular revelation from heaven, to teach the unity and attributes of the only true God, to scatter the darkness of superstition and idolatry, and teach men the simple, sublime, and holy worship, which ought to be paid him.

Between the days of Noah and Jesus Christ were about two thousand years. And during this long period, idolatry was the established religion of all nations, the Israelites excepted. And it seems, at the first blush, that the common sense of men, especially of the learned and civilized, would have taught them the absurdity of worshipping so many gods, and the impiety of the worship paid them. But neither their common sense, nor the light of nature, taught them to see, that there was *a lie in their right hands*. With all their great abilities, with all their fine speculations and reasonings, the wisest philosophers were not able to instruct and reform themselves, nor deliver their minds from the absurdity of adoring idols. To prove, that this is true of even the wisest of the heathen philosophers, we shall state, in the words of Bishop Sherlock, the case of Socrates, the great heathen philosopher. "Were all the wise men of antiquity," says the Bishop, "to plead their cause, they could not get a more able counsellor. This wise man, this great philosopher, had talked so freely about the heathen deities, and the ridiculous stories told of them, that he fell under the suspicion of despising the gods of his country, and of teaching the young people, in Athens, to despise their altars and worship. An accusation was accordingly brought against him,

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of slighting and despising the gods worshipped by his countrymen. He was complained of to the high court of the Areopagites, which was the supreme council of the nation. When brought before this court, he defended himself, in the most learned manner, and clearly proved, that the accusation was entirely destitute of any evidence. For, he asserted and maintained, before his judges, that he worshipped all the gods of his country ; that he observed, in the most strict manner, all the religious rites and ceremonies instituted to these gods ; that he sacrificed to them, in private ; that he sacrificed to them, in public, upon the established altars, according to the rites and customs of the city. After this public confession and defence of Socrates, we need not hesitate about his true character. He was an idolator, and had not, by his great wisdom and ability, in reasoning, delivered his own mind from the superstition and mistakes, that were so prevalent, in the heathen world. Can the wisdom of the world go further, in any case, than in the case of Socrates ? He is allowed, on all hands, to have been the wisest and greatest man of antiquity, to have been the most able philosopher, that the heathen world ever produced. And, yet, we see, by his own confession and defence, made before his judges, he was an idolator."

If the light of nature, aided by the wisdom and experience of Socrates, could not deliver himself nor the people of Athens, from the absurdity of heathen superstition, is it a supposable case, that the light of nature would be more instructive and efficacious, in the present age of the world ? Deists can, now, easily discern the folly and impiety of heathen idolatry. They understand, that idols, and the obscene, barbarous, and impious worship, formerly given them, are ridiculous and inconsistent. From whence did they gain this knowledge ? Who delivered the nations of Europe from the religious folly and superstition of Paganism ? Who hath enlightened and reformed their minds ? Will modern infidels pretend, that they have more sagacity, than the ancient philosophers ? That the light of nature is more clear, than formerly ? Can they state the time, when the nations of Europe renounced their idolatry, deserted temples built to idols, believed in the unity of God, and obtained just sentiments of his character, government, and the worship, due to him ?

To act an ingenuous part, must they not impute this great reformation, in sentiment and conduct, to the preaching and propagating of that gospel, which they ridicule and despise? They may be defied to name any other means.

“After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.” (1 Cor. i. 21.) The philosophers and their disciples had labored, many hundred years, to reclaim men, and instruct them, in what they deemed the principles of religion. And during all this long space of time, with all the wisdom of their wisest men, the nations of the earth, instead of growing more wise, grew more ignorant of God and his character; and, instead of reforming their morals and rites of worship, they grew more immoral and superstitious. But when, it pleased God by (*what wicked men call*) the foolishness of preaching, to scatter light through the world, then the despised gospel of Christ prevailed among the most powerful and learned nations. The minds of men were enlightened, their sentiments were corrected, and their morals and modes of worship were changed. Wherever the gospel came, the ignorance and superstitions of heathenism fled before it. The exhibition of divine truth dissipated those dark clouds of superstition, which had obscured and bewildered the minds of men. Heathen temples were forsaken and shut up, their altars were left, and the worshippers, in general, embraced the faith and piety of the gospel.

But the freethinkers of the age esteem the gospel as an imposition on common sense, as of no benefit to the world. That men have no need of a divine revelation, is, with them, a favorite maxim. To a man acquainted with the religious sentiments and moral character of the ancient heathen, and the surprising alteration effected, by the preaching of the gospel, this maxim will appear as ridiculous, as it is absurd. For, if divine revelation had not been communicated to men, it is more than probable, the world would, still, have been sunk in all the depths of heathen darkness, superstition, and wickedness. Instead of a rational and pure worship, which men, now, enjoy, they would have been bowing down to stocks and stones. Instead of solemn prayer and praise, and the instruction, received from the preaching of God's

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holy word, they would have been offering human victims, and attempting to appease the gods, by the most absurd and impious rites. Instead of convening together, in houses of prayer, where they can worship the *Trinity* in *Unity*, they would have been paying their stupid devotions to Jupiter, or Saturn, or Neptune, or Apollo, or Juno, or Venus, or Diana, or some other of the numerous gods and goddesses, whom the ancient heathen, formerly, worshipped, and whom many of the nations of the earth do now worship. To continue the subject, we shall observe,

5. That men need a revelation, to teach them the certainty of the immortality of the soul, of the resurrection of the body to another life, and the nature of rewards and punishments, in the other state of being.

That the souls of men are *certainly* immortal, is a doctrine, taught only by special revelation from heaven. Philosophers and moralists, may reason upon the nature of the soul, and demonstrate its spirituality, and indivisibility, its desires and expectations of existing hereafter, and its dread of annihilation; and from these premises may conclude, that the soul of man is immortal; and the conclusion may yield a degree of satisfaction to a contemplative mind. But, on this conclusion there is no absolute dependence: For God, who created the soul, on whose power and goodness it is dependent for constant existence, may easily reduce it to its original state of not being. And, that God will not annihilate the soul, that he will continue it, in existence, during eternity, nature furnishes no argument, it gives us no certain evidence. Its spirituality is no defence, no preservative, if God will that death should seal up all its powers, in eternal night. All its ardent desires and expectations of an immortal existence, beyond the grave, may be, easily, frustrated, by that omnipotent hand, which first gave it existence. And, of course, that the soul is immortal is wholly dependent on the sovereign pleasure of God; and our sure knowledge of its immortality is wholly derived from the light of revelation. In the Bible, we are plainly and expressly taught, that the human soul is an immortal being.

But the light of nature affords no certain and conclusive evidence of this truth. And, accordingly, the greater part of Deists, who reject the Bible, as a system of fables and nonsense,

sense, either deny the immortality of the soul, or ridicule the sentiment, or speak of it as a subject, which is very uncertain and dubious. And the same was the language of the ancient philosophers. Having no sure principles, on which to build their belief of the soul's immortality, they were constantly filled with doubts and perplexities. They seemed to be convinced, at times, of the certainty of a future state. And, at other times, they expressed themselves with a great degree of hesitancy and instability. "I am going," said Socrates to his friends, a little before his death, "I am going from hence, and am about to leave this world; ye are left to continue in it; which of us have the better part allotted us, God only knows." At the conclusion of his discourse on the immortality of the soul, he said to his friends, "I would have you to know, that I have great hopes, I am now going into the company of good men; yet I would not be too peremptory and confident concerning it." Speaking on this same subject, Cicero says: "I will endeavour to explain what you desire; yet I would not have you depend upon what I shall say as certain and infallible. But I may guess, as other men do, at what shall seem most probable; and further than this I cannot pretend to go." And, discoursing upon the question, whether or not the soul be immortal, the same orator says: "Which of these two opinions be true, God only knows; which of them is most probable, is a very great question."

If Socrates and Cicero, two of the greatest and wisest men among the ancients, had their doubts and fears about the immortality of the soul, we may fairly conclude, that they knew of no arguments to give them absolute certainty, on this point. Could the light of nature have communicated certain indubitable knowledge, they never would have expressed themselves, with so much reserve and obscurity. Of these philosophers, some believed in the immortality of the soul; but they ever had their doubts and fears. And there were other whole sects, who denied this doctrine, and believed, that death eternally closed the scene of man's existence.

Mankind, in general, before the coming of Christ, had very obscure notions of futurity. Their traditional accounts were very confused, and their knowledge of another world mainly



mainly consisted, in uncertain guesses and suppositions. The doctrine of their Tartarean regions and Elysian fields, was built on the fables of their poets. They were, necessarily, in the greatest uncertainty, whether or not this life ended their existence. This doubtful thought must continually perplex their minds, and add a keen sting to all the comforts and pleasures of life. To the heathen, death carried a most terrible and alarming sound, and was attended with the most shocking and melancholy considerations. The thoughts of futurity would mix with all their entertainments and diversions, and afflict them in all their pursuits and undertakings. And the sober and judicious confessed, that this was true of them. This made Cicero, the famous Roman orator, say, that *death, like the rock of Tantalus, forever hung over their heads*. Thus shocking must death be to the heathen, who had no solid hope of a resurrection from the grave. And, although there might be some professed libertines among them, as there are some in a christian land, who might pretend to ridicule the thought of being terrified by death; yet it would cast a damp over all their joys, and leave no present gratification free from pain and uneasiness. May we not, therefore, conclude, with the greatest certainty, that mankind greatly needed a particular revelation, to teach them the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the state of the virtuous and vicious, in the other world? Were it not for the light of the gospel, mankind would have remained, in all their confusion, and doubt, and perplexity, about the next state of existence. How entirely different from heathenism, is the scene, under the gospel dispensation? What very different apprehensions of death and eternity may all the true disciples of Christ entertain, when they have such certain knowledge, that death is so far from injuring their most refined pleasures, and destroying their best pursuits, that it puts them into a capacity of enjoying them more perfectly, and opens a door for a more free, full, and uninterrupted enjoyment of them during eternity? The heaven, promised to Christians in the gospel, is totally different from those Elysian fields, those blessed abodes, of which the ancient poets sung, in strains sublime. In the heaven of Christians is the presence of God, displayed in all his power and glory. Here is the company of holy angels, and glorified

fied spirits, whose hearts are attuned to love. Here are pleasures without alloy; happiness, without any interruption; and here the glory of God ravishes every heart, inflames every breast, and makes the whole consummately blessed. To understand, with clearness, this glory, and to enjoy the means of gaining it, was the gospel preached to men. And, notwithstanding the gospel is despised by infidels, yet its hopes and expectations are infinitely superior to those, that are derived from natural religion. "Nature," says the learned Prelate, whom we have often quoted, "Nature sees all her children go down to the grave. All beyond the grave is, to her, one wide waste, a land of doubt and uncertainty. When she looks into it, she has her doubts and her uncertainty, her hopes and her fears; and, agitated by the vicissitude of these passions, she has no ground whereon to rest her foot. But how different is the prospect, which the gospel opens to view? In the gospel, we see the heavenly Canaan, the New Jerusalem. In this city of Jehovah, there are mansions, many mansions, to receive them, *who through faith and patient continuing in well doing, seek for glory and immortality.* Our glorious Savior has abolished death, and redeemed the *faithful* into the glorious liberties of the sons of God; and promised, that they shall live and reign in his presence, as long as eternity itself shall last."

But how miserable is the consolation of Deists! They have no divine instructor, no Savior, no certainty of future existence, of a resurrection from the grave, of eternal felicity. With them all is darkness, doubt and perplexity. And to this unhappy state are they reduced, because they reject Jesus Christ, who is *the resurrection and the life.*



## CHAPTER II.

*The Evidence in favor of Revealed Religion, arising from Miracles.*

IT appears, from the preceding chapter, that mankind stand in need of a divine revelation. The next inquiry, of course, is, whether the Bible, which we have in our hands, contain such a revelation. All must acknowledge, who have read the Sacred Volume, that it comes to us under a divine signature, and claims to be the Word of God. This claim is not founded upon the bare declaration of the Sacred Writers ; but upon the Miracles which were wrought, to prove their divine mission. To give this argument in favor of revealed religion its proper force, we shall, first, fix and determine the nature of miracles ; then point out the professed purpose, for which they were wrought ; and, in the last place, make it appear, that they sufficiently answer the end proposed.

I. We are to explain the nature of miracles. These have been very differently defined by different authors. But without spending time to examine their definitions, it may be sufficient to say, that *a miracle is an effect, wrought by God himself, out of the common course of nature.*

Though, in a loose sense, *men* may be said to work miracles ; yet, in a strict and proper sense, they are the immediate production of the *Deity*. In this light, they are uniformly represented in scripture. The miracles of our Savior are expressly ascribed to God. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by *miracles*, and *wonders*, and *signs*, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” It is plainly said, that “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.” And it is no less plainly said, that God wrought miracles in favor of the other Apostles. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto

unto us by them that heard him ; *God* also bearing them witness, both with *signs* and *wonders*, and with *divers miracles*. Agreeably to these representations, those who are said to work miracles disclaim their *own*, and acknowledge the *divine* agency, in their production. Christ, speaking of his own miracles, expressly declares, “ The *Father*, that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the works.” Peter and John disclaim the honor of curing the impotent man, and ascribe it to Him, to whom alone it was justly due. “ Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, although *by our own power or holiness* we had made this man to walk ? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus—And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know : Yea the faith which is by him hath given this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” The ancient prophets also disclaimed the power of working miracles, and in the same manner ascribed it to God. When Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream, to interpret it ; Joseph replied, “ It is *not* in me : *God* shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” And when Nebuchadnezzar said unto Daniel, “ Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof ? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, There is a *God in heaven* that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days : But *as for me*, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living.”

The manner in which miracles were produced, further shows, that they were wrought by the finger of God. There was no natural connection, between the miracles of Moses and his own exertions. His throwing down his rod, had no natural tendency to turn it into a serpent ; and his taking it up, had no natural tendency to turn it into a rod again. There was no natural connection between the sound of rams' horns, and the falling of the walls of Jericho. And Elisha's casting a stick into the water, was no natural efficient cause of the young Prophet's ax rising and swimming upon the surface. In all these instances, the miracles were immediately owing to a divine agency. And the manner, in which Christ  
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and the apostles wrought miracles, equally discovers the immediate hand of God. Our Savior did but say to the sea, *Be still*, and it was still. He did but say to the leper, *Be thou clean*; and immediately the leprosy departed from him. He did but say to the young man, whom they were carrying to the grave, *I say unto thee arise*; and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. He did but say to Lazarus, *Come forth*; and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. Our Lord told his apostles, that they might work miracles in the same manner, and if they only said, in faith, to this or that mountain, *Be thou removed and cast into the sea*, the miraculous effect should instantly follow. Now, this manner of working miracles, by a word's speaking, is a clear evidence, that they were wrought by Him, who said, *Let there be light*, and there was light; that is, by God himself. The prophets and apostles were only the *occasion*, and not the *efficient cause* of the miracles, which are ascribed to them. No *natural*, nor even *delegated* power of their own, had the least influence in producing a *miraculous* effect. This was wholly owing to the immediate power and agency of the Deity, who, strictly speaking, in every instance, wrought the miracle.

It is, now, time to consider the last branch of our definition, which is, that a miracle must be wrought, not only by God himself, but out of the common course of nature. God has been pleased to prescribe a rule of conduct to himself, according to which he commonly operates, in governing the affairs of the world. And so long as he acts agreeably to this rule, no effects, which he produces, however great or wonderful, can be properly called miracles. But, whenever he departs from the common course of nature, and produces any effect, that effect is really a miracle. Accordingly we find, that all the miracles, which are recorded in scripture, were apparently wrought, out of the common course of nature. It was out of God's usual course of conduct, to cause the Red sea to divide, roll back, and stand still, while his people passed over on dry ground. It was out of God's usual course of conduct, to preserve Daniel in the lion's den, and the three worthies in the burning fiery furnace. And it was contrary to every known law of nature, for Christ to cure the lame, heal the sick, and raise the dead,

dead, by a word's speaking. Thus, according to scripture, a miracle is an effect, wrought by God himself, out of the common course of nature.

But against this definition it may be objected, in the first place, that we are not fully acquainted with the laws of nature, and, therefore, we cannot absolutely determine when God does, or does not, act agreeably to them.

It is true, indeed, we cannot comprehend the utmost bounds of nature, and, of consequence, cannot determine, in all cases, whether the laws of nature are superseded, or not. But it would be very absurd to infer from this, that there are no plain cases, in which we can easily and clearly determine, that the laws of nature are suspended or counteracted. We often meet with doubtful cases in seeing, hearing, and reasoning; but we never infer from these, that there are no plain cases, in which we know, that we see and hear and reason according to truth. Supposing we cannot determine, whether there was any thing contrary to nature, in the cures which were wrought in the pool of Bethesda; yet, this does not prove, that we cannot determine, that there was something contrary to nature, in God's dividing the Red Sea, and in Christ's raising the dead to life. Though we cannot fix the precise boundaries of nature; yet we can determine, in plain cases, when it is really counteracted. We know, for instance, that it is the nature of fire to consume human bodies; and, therefore, we know, that nature was controlled, in the preservation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the burning fiery furnace. Hence our definition of a miracle is just and accurate; though there may be doubtful cases, in which it may be difficult to draw the line exactly, between *natural* and *supernatural* effects.

But still some may say, Did not the magicians work miracles? Did not God suppose that a prophet or dreamer of dreams might arise among his people, and give a sign or a wonder? Did not Christ foretel the coming of false prophets, who should show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, were it possible, the very elect? And did not John represent the Beast, which he foretold, as making fire come down from heaven, in the sight of men, and deceiving the inhabitants of the earth, by the miracles which he performed?

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These representations seem to refute the notion, that none but God can work miracles.

A very few observations are sufficient to remove this plausible objection.

1. It must be allowed, that there is a difference between *true* miracles, and all those things, which only resemble them. Let any definition be given of a miracle, and it must be true, that there is a difference between a miracle, and any thing, which only carries the appearance of it. So that all must allow, that there is a difference between *true* and *false* miracles; or, in other words, between *real* miracles, and all those things, which only resemble them. This distinction is made in the Bible. Ezekiel declares, concerning the false prophets, "They have seen vanity and *lying* divination." And thus appeals to them for the truth of his declaration: "Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a *lying* divination?" Paul, likewise, represents the Man of Sin as having power to perform signs and *lying* wonders, that is, *false* miracles. According to scripture as well as reason, there must be a difference between *true* miracles and *false*. But,

2. There can be no other distinction, between *true* and *false* miracles, than this: *True* miracles are wrought by *God*, and *false* miracles are wrought by *creatures*. For God to do only that, which any creature can do, is no miracle; because, by doing what creatures are able to do, he does not discover his own power, or interposition. And to suppose that creatures can perform miracles, is to suppose, that there is no real perceptible difference, between a miracle and a common action. For, upon this supposition, a miracle, as well as a common action, is performed, by that power, which is natural to creatures. And one exertion of mere natural power is no more a miracle than another. Hence, there is nothing that men can do by *their* natural power, which deserves the name of a miracle. And, for the same reason, nothing can be called a miracle, which Satan is able to do by *his* natural power. So that no creatures whatever can work miracles. But if no creatures can work miracles, then miracles must be such effects as are wrought, by the immediate power and agency of God, out of the usual course of his operation. Accordingly we find, that the scripture distinguishes *true* miracles from *false*, by ascribing *true* miracles

acles to God, and *false* miracles, or lying wonders, to *created agents*. The miracles of Moses are ascribed to God ; but the miracles of the magicians to their *enchantments*. And the magicians themselves made the same distinction. When lice were produced, they said unto Pharaoh, "*This is the finger of God.*" Paul ascribes the false miracles of the Man of Sin to the agency of Satan. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed—whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and *lying wonders.*" And the apostle John ascribes these same signs and lying wonders to the operation of the devil. "And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. *For they are the spirits of devils working miracles.*" Now, if there be a distinction between *true* miracles and *false* ; and if all miracles and signs, which are wrought by wicked men or devils, are *false* miracles, or *lying wonders* ; then, it necessarily follows, that *all true* miracles are the immediate production of the Deity, or effects, wrought by God himself, out of the common course of nature. The way is now prepared,

II. To point out the professed purpose, for which miracles were wrought. We must suppose, that God had some important purpose to answer, by stepping out of the usual course of his operation, and controlling the laws of nature. And if we look into the Bible, we shall find that the great design, which God expressly proposed, in working miracles, was to *attest* the divine mission of those, whom he authorised to bear his messages to mankind. Here we may observe,

1. This purpose was expressly proposed, at the time when miracles were wrought. God promised Moses and Aaron, that he would attest their divine mission to Pharaoh, whenever he should call for their credentials. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, *Shew a miracle for you* ; then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent." And when God came down upon mount Sinai, with majesty and great glory, it was to give a clear and striking testimony to the divine mission of Moses. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, *that the people may hear when I speak*



I speak with thee, and *believe thee forever.*" After Elijah had publicly professed to be a true prophet, he prayed to God to confirm his profession, by a special miracle. "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and *that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.*" God heard this his request, and *attested his divine mission*, before all the people, by miraculously consuming the sacrifice prepared. The miracles of Christ are expressly said to be attestations of his divine authority. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man *approved of God* among you, by *miracles*, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." When Peter went to Cornelius, he again asserted, that God had borne public testimony to the divine mission of Christ, by miracles. "Then Peter opened his mouth and said—The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all: That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began in Galilee, after the baptism, which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and *healing all that were oppressed of the devil: For God was with him.*" And as God attested the divine mission of Christ, by miracles; so Christ gave the same kind of attestation to the divine mission of the apostles. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, *the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*" With this agrees the account given of Paul and Barnabas, while they continued at Iconium. "Long time therefore abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord, *who gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*" Hence it appears, that the professed purpose, for which miracles were wrought, under both the Jewish and Christian dispensation, was to attest the divine mission of those, whom God  
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authorised to reveal his will to the children of men. And this leads us to observe,

2. That the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, appealed to miracles, as the highest credentials of their divine mission. We have already seen, that Moses and Elijah appealed to miracles, to prove that they were sent of God, to reveal his will and plead his cause. Our Savior likewise appealed to his miracles, as the highest credentials of his mediatorial character and conduct. When John sent two of his disciples to Jesus, to inquire whether he was the promised Messiah; instead of saying, in so many words, that he was the Christ, he referred them to his miracles, as the highest proof of it. "And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another? Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." When the scribes scrupled his authority to forgive sins, he wrought a miracle to prove it. "And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier? to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But *that ye may know* that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose and departed unto his house. But when the multitudes saw it they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men." When the Jews accused him of blasphemy, for claiming to be the Son of God, he appealed to his miracles, to prove the propriety of his claim. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, *believe the works.*" And to confirm the same truth, he said again to the Jews; "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: Or else believe me *for the very works' sake.*" Upon the occasion of his curing the impotent man on the Sabbath, he once more vindicated his divine authority and mission, by appealing first to the testimony of John, and then to the testimony of his miracles. "But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same



works that I do bear witness of me, *that the Father hath sent me.*" Peter and John appealed to a miracle wrought in their favor, to confirm the divine authority, by which they preached the gospel, and acted in the name of Christ. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole." When this stopped the mouths of their adversaries, who durst only threaten them, they took courage, and prayed, that the testimony of miracles might still attend their preaching. "Now, Lord, behold their *threatenings*: And grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, *by stretching forth thine hand to heal*; and that *signs and wonders may be done by thy holy child Jesus.*" Paul, the last of the apostles, appealed once and again to his miracles, as the infallible evidence of his apostleship, which was frequently called in question. To the Romans he says, "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through *mighty signs and wonders*, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." And to convince the Corinthians of the reality of his divine mission, he was obliged to appeal to his miracles, the proper and acknowledged signs of an apostle. "I am become a fool in glorying: Ye have compelled me: For I ought to have been commended of you: For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing. *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*"

It is now sufficiently evident, we trust, that miracles were wrought for the professed purpose of proving the divine mission of those, whom God sent to reveal his will to the children of men. This appears from the plain declarations of scripture, and from the conduct of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles, who constantly appealed to miracles, as the highest credentials of their divine mission and authority, to speak and  
act

act in the name of the living and true God. It only remains to make it appear,

III. That miracles answer the end for which they were designed.

What we mean by this proposition is, that miracles carry such evidence of the truth and divinity of the Scriptures, as ought to convince us, that they are the Word of God. It is true, the evidence of miracles, as well as any other external evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures, may be disregarded, and of consequence disbelieved. It is not pretended, therefore, that miracles give irresistible evidence of revealed religion; but only such evidence as is sufficient to convince every one, who examines it with attention and candor. But before we proceed to illustrate this point, it seems necessary to meet the enemies of divine revelation in the threshold, and to premise, that the miracles which are recorded in scripture are as *credible*, or worthy to be believed, as any other *facts*, which are related in the Bible, or in any other ancient history. They were addressed to men's eyes, and ears, and understandings. They were performed in the face of day, in the most public places, and in the most public manner. And they were of such an uncommon and extraordinary nature, as to excite the curiosity and attention of both friends and foes. These circumstances put it into the power of the spectators to examine their reality. The miracles of Moses were exhibited before the king, and court, and wise men, of Egypt; which gave them the fairest opportunity of satisfying themselves, whether they were realities, or mere delusions. The miracle of Elijah was wrought before the prophets, and priests, and people of Israel, who, with one consent and with a loud voice, proclaimed their belief of the fact. The miracles, which were wrought in favor of Daniel and the three worthies, were exhibited in the most public manner, and before vast multitudes of spectators. Our Savior's miracles were performed on public and solemn occasions, and in the presence of friends and enemies. He raised Lazarus and the widow's son from the dead, before large collections of people. And Peter cured the impotent man at the gate of the temple, in the midst of the rulers and people of Israel. And in all these instances, the beholders were constrained to acknowledge the reality of the miracles. Besides, there was another



another circumstance, which greatly increased the credibility of the miracles that are recorded in the Bible. They were never wrought on slight or trivial occasions, but only when some end, worthy of the Deity, required his immediate interposition and exertion. By leaving out this single circumstance, a late writer has endeavored to destroy the importance, and consequently the credibility of miracles. He has this shrewd remark: "Suppose I were to say, that when I sat down to write this book, a hand presented itself in the air, took up the pen and wrote every word that is herein written; would any body believe me? Certainly they would not." It is granted they would not believe him; and for this plain reason, the occasion did not require the interposition of the Deity. But this cannot be said in respect to the miracles, which are recorded in scripture. They were wrought on important occasions, which required the interposition of the immediate hand of heaven. It was highly becoming the Supreme Being to attest the divine mission of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles, whom he sent to accomplish the most interesting and important designs. This consideration gives a credibility to scripture miracles, which cannot be found in the strange and wonderful things related by profane authors. And notwithstanding some weak and superficial writers, in favor of infidelity, have called in question the existence of the miracles, which are recorded in the Bible; yet Josephus, Celsus, and Julian, the most learned and bitter enemies of the Christian religion, have frankly acknowledged their truth and reality. We may rely upon it, therefore, that the miracles, which are related in scripture, did actually exist. This being premised, we proceed to observe,

1. The miracles of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles, carried as much evidence of their divine mission, as mankind ever required. Pharaoh required no higher evidence, that Moses came from God, than his working miracles. It seems to have been a given point with the people of Israel, that if Elijah wrought a real miracle, he was the true prophet of the Lord. And the Jews in general expected the Messiah, when he came, would exhibit no higher evidence of his divine mission, than that of miracles. This they acknowledged on a certain occasion, by saying, "When Christ

Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" Besides, his enemies frequently desired and required him to produce the testimony of miracles, in favor of his divine mission and authority. Once they said, "What *sign* shewest thou, that we may see, and believe thee?" Once they said, "Master, we would see a *sign* from thee." And they repeatedly desired him, "that he would shew them a *sign* from heaven." Men had a right to expect and require this evidence of the divine mission of the prophets, Christ, and the apostles; and when they exhibited this evidence in their favor, every person ought to have been entirely satisfied with it. It is, therefore, the dictate of common sense, that those divine teachers gave clear and sufficient evidence of their divine mission, by the miracles which they wrought.

2. Their miracles actually convinced many of their divine mission. The Jewish nation in general were convinced, "*that God spake unto Moses.*" Many individuals believed, that Christ was sent of God. His first miracle "*manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.*" While he attended the passover at Jerusalem, "*many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.*" His miracles convinced Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, of his divine mission. "Rabbi, says he, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: *For no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*" His giving sight to the man born blind raised a dispute about the evidence of miracles, and finally discovered the conviction, which that miracle carried to the minds of the candid. "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, *He is a prophet.* Then said they unto him, Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear; Wherefore would you hear



hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him and said, *Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.* The man answered and said unto them, *Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*" Christ raised Lazarus from the grave, after he had been dead four days, with a view to make men believe his divine mission, and he actually accomplished his purpose. The account is this: "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always: But because of the people which stand by, I said it, *that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: And his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then *many* of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, *believed on him.* But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, *What do we? For this man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: And the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.*" The miracles of the apostles carried equal conviction to the spectators, who were equally prejudiced against them. The Jewish council, who arraigned Peter and John before them, for healing the man lame from his mother's womb, were fully convinced of their divine mission, by the evidence of that miracle. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, *they could say nothing against it.* But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying,

saying, What shall we do with these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.* There is another instance of the convincing evidence of miracles, which is related in the eighth of Acts. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria; and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the *miracles* which he did.—Then Simon himself *believed* also: And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the *miracles* and *signs* which were done." It appears from these facts, that the miracles of the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, did actually convince, both friends and foes, that they were teachers come from God.

3. Their miracles carried such evidence of their divine authority, as none of their powerful and subtil enemies could gainsay or destroy. Men of corrupt minds used all their power and art to destroy their credentials; but they were unable to accomplish their malignant purpose. The magicians, at first, confronted the miracles of Moses, with their enchantments; but they were finally constrained to acknowledge the finger of God in favor of the prophet. The prophets of Baal attempted to destroy the authority of Elijah; but the miracle, which they labored in vain to produce, and which he actually wrought, completely destroyed their credit, and established his own. The miracles of Christ put to silence both men and devils. And though some presumed to imitate the miracles of the apostles; yet they met with that shame, reproach, and disappointment, which they justly deserved. Let us read the account. "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then, certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed



vailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus : And fear fell on them all ; and the name of the Lord was magnified. And *many that believed* came, and *confessed*, and *shewed their deeds*. Many also of them which used curious arts brought *their books* together, and *burned them* before all men ; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." Thus effectually did miracles answer the purpose for which they were wrought. They triumphed over all opposition ; exposed the delusions of Satan ; and constrained even diviners and forcerers, to believe the truth and divinity of the gospel.

4. Miracles pledge the *divine veracity* ; and therefore infallibly prove the divine mission of those, in whose favor they are wrought. We have shewn, that they are produced by the *finger of God*, and for the *professed purpose* of confirming the divine mission of those, whom he authorises to reveal his will. Hence miracles have the nature of a *testimony*, and do actually pledge the *divine veracity*. God assured Moses, when he sent him to Pharaoh, that he would confirm his mission, by miracles. And Christ gave the same assurance his disciples, when he sent them to preach the gospel. Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and *to heal the sick*." All the true prophets and apostles had the promise of God, that he would work miracles, to manifest to the world, that he sent them. Accordingly, they had a right to call upon God to work miracles, to confirm their divine mission. This right Elijah exercised, when Ahaziah sent a band of soldiers to apprehend him. " Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty, with his fifty. And he went up to him. And behold he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered, and said to the captain of fifty, *If I be a man of God*, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty." Elijah called upon God to fulfil his promise, and confirm his mission,

sion. This miracle was the fulfilment of God's promise, and pledged his veracity, that Elijah was his prophet. Just as when God wrought a miracle in favor of any prophet or apostle, he said, by his conduct, which spake louder than words, "*This is my servant ; hear ye him.*" Hence God is said to *bear witness* to the divine mission of Christ and of the apostles, by giving them his own testimony and miracles. Christ says, "I have greater *witness* than that of John : For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do *bear witness* of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne *witness* of me." And of the apostles it is said that "God did bear them *witness*, both with *signs* and *wonders*, and with *divers miracles.*" A witness pledges his veracity. And when God witnessed the divine mission of Christ and of the apostles, he pledged his own veracity. Hence the evidence of miracles is the most plain, obvious and infallible proof of the divine mission of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles, that an infinitely wise and powerful and faithful God could give to them, and to those to whom they were sent. It is now necessary to observe, one more,

5. That this infallible proof of revealed religion is perpetual, and justly claims the belief of all, who enjoy the Bible. Some, who seem to allow, that miracles might be a temporary proof of revealed religion ; yet, deny that they can be a standing evidence of divine revelation. A late retailer of infidelity presumes to say, "A miracle could be but a thing of the moment, and seen but by a few ; after this, requires a transfer of faith, from God to man, to believe a miracle upon man's report. Instead, therefore, of admitting the recitals of miracles, as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of religion being fabulous." This representation is extremely unjust and fallacious ; because it confounds ideas, which ought to be kept entirely distinct. The existence of miracles is one thing ; and the evidence, which their existence affords, in favor of revealed religion, is another. Our belief, that miracles did really exist, must depend upon *human testimony* ; but our belief, that they prove a divine mission, must depend upon *divine testimony*. We must believe the reality of miracles,



miracles, upon the report of those, who saw them performed ; and they believed the existence of the miracles, which they saw performed, upon the testimony of their own eyes, and ears, and other senses. The belief of the existence of miracles, in both these cases, is wholly founded upon *human testimony*, without any transfer of faith, from God to man. Now, this being true, it is easy to see, that miracles afford us precisely the same evidence of a divine mission, that they afforded the spectators themselves. The sacred writers have told us what miracles were wrought in favor of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles ; and now we have a just right and fair opportunity to judge, whether those miracles did really prove their divine mission. The miracles, which were wrought in favor of Moses, give us the same evidence of his being sent of God, that they gave to Pharaoh, and others, who saw them. The miracles, which were wrought in favor of Christ, give us the same evidence of his being the promised Messiah, and Savior of the world, that they gave to the apostles, and the rest of the spectators of them. And the miracles, which were wrought in favor of the apostles, give us the same evidence of their divine mission, that they gave to those, before whom they were actually wrought. Hence, if Pharaoh ought to believe the divine mission of Moses ; then, we ought to believe it. If the Jews ought to believe the divine mission of Christ ; then, we ought to believe it. And if the Gentiles ought to believe the divine mission of the apostles ; then, we ought to believe it. The distance of time and place does not diminish the divine testimony of miracles, in favor of revealed religion. It comes to us, attested by the finger of God ; and those, who disbelieve it, we have no reason to think, would be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

## CHAPTER III.

*The Evidence in Favor of Revealed Religion, arising from  
Prophecy and its Fulfilment.*

**I**N compaffion to the fons of men, the Divine Being has been pleased to give them a religion, fuch as their circumftances required, and calculated to make them happy in this and the coming world. And he has been pleased fo to authenticate this religion as to ftrike conviction into the mind of every man, who exercifes the fmalleft degree of candor and impartiality. As a belief in divine revelation is not demanded, but on the moft rational principles ; fo God has not only taught men their need of a religion from heaven, and its importance to them ; but he has alfo given the moft fubftantial evidence of its being divine. Its fpirituality and tendency, and the miracles wrought in its confirmation are proofs fufficient to bow the minds of all, who fhut not their eyes againft the light.

For our confolation, however, and to furnifh us with arguments againft infidelity, we have a *sure word of prophecy* which confirms our faith, and animates our hearts with vigor and joy.

Prophecy may well be confidered as a main pillar, in the Chriftian edifice ; as a chief corner ftone, which fupports the building, againft the attacks and ftorms of infidels. If holy men have been infpired, by God, to predict future events, and if the events have taken place according to the predictions, then, that the religion eftablifhed by their miniftry is of divine original, is a plain, indifputable, confequence.

To prophesy is to foretel future events, the knowledge of which is communicated to the prophet, by the omnifcient God, who alone fees through caufes and effects, and can certainly tell what will happen. Men may form conjecture and fuppoftions, about futurity, but they amount to no certain conclufive evidence. Events may, or may not, take place, as they have conjectured. But with God there is no uncertainty.



uncertainty, there is no conjecture. He perfectly knows what he is about to do, and what will be the future actions of all moral dependent beings, and what causes will produce certain effects; and, of course, he can easily foretell, not only the great revolutions in kingdoms and states, but all the future minute circumstances, respecting individuals.

That the spirit of prophecy may be given to men, is a rational supposition. For God, none will deny, can easily impress the human mind with knowledge. By visions, dreams, or particular representations, he can so teach men, as to make them fully acquainted with future things. As God perfectly foresees all things, which are to take place, as well as comprehends every thing past, or present; so he can reveal to others any events, respecting particular persons, or kingdoms.

In all ages, and among all nations, it has been a received maxim, that the Deity may reveal secret and future things, by signs, voices, dreams, visions, and external representations. The great variety of auguries, divinations, and consulting of oracles, that have been, uniformly, practised among the heathen, establishes this point, beyond any dispute. In consulting their oracles, and divining by the flight of birds, the entrails of beasts, and the prodigies of heaven, the heathen acted upon the principle, that the Supreme Ruler could converse with men by voices, or certain representations, and impress on their minds the knowledge of futurity.

The heathen made great dependence on their auguries and divinations. In all their undertakings, especially important ones, they consulted the gods, and believed in the answers they received. These answers, however, were clouded with ambiguity, and often proved fallacious. Of this nature was the answer, which Pyrrhus received, when preparing to fight the Romans. He consulted the oracle about his success, and received this ambiguous answer: "Dico, Æacide, Romanos te vincere posse." Which may be translated, "I tell you, Pyrrhus, that you can conquer the Romans." Or it may be thus translated, "I tell you, Pyrrhus, that the Romans can conquer you."

The existence of divination among the heathen, although spurious, is an argument in favor of a true revelation from heaven. For it would never have entered the minds of the  
heathen

heathen to consult their gods, in the manner, they did, except they had received, from sure tradition, that the true God had, in the first ages of the world, communicated to men a knowledge of his will and pleasure, by dreams, visions, and prophetic signs. Men's believing in a false religion is evidence of there being a true religion. Were there no true money current among men, no counterfeit coin could possibly exist. An impostor is ever substituted in the room of a true person. A false prophet is ever admitted upon the principle, that he is a true prophet. And so false divinations are proof, that the true God can reveal himself, and has revealed himself, to men. The creation and preservation of the world, simply considered, afford no certain evidence, that men, in any age, have received instruction from heaven, by a particular revelation. The Deity must first converse with men, with an audible voice, or impress certain truths on their minds, by dreams, visions, or prophetic representations, before they would believe in any kind of prophecy whatever. But when a true prophecy has been once, given, it is easy to conceive, that false prophecies may have an existence. Knowing, that God had, once, or repeatedly, revealed himself, impostors might easily feign themselves to be his true prophets, and idolators might be induced to ascribe a power to their fictitious gods, which had been exerted by the true God.

Whatever information of God, and of moral duties, may arise, from contemplating the works of creation and providence, it is very plain, that positive duties can be known only by a particular revelation. That God is, and that he is to be worshipped by men, is plain, from the light of nature. But the manner of this worship, and a great variety of positive duties, must, necessarily, depend on express revelation.

And, accordingly, God, as we hope to make evident, has often endued men with the spirit of prophecy, and expressly taught his moral creatures the great truths of religion. The religion, given by Moses, was entirely built on communications of the will and pleasure of God, to Abraham and his posterity. God was pleased to establish, among them, his holy oracles, which they might consult for their direction and comfort; and from which they received plain and unequivocal answers.



To strengthen their faith, and animate their hopes, God raised up a succession of prophets, who, from time to time, predicted events, the most astonishing and most unlikely to happen, and which nearly concerned the prosperity of Israel. God also manifested to their view many future events, relating to the whole world, in general, or to nations, in particular.

Noah was taught, by the spirit of prophecy, that the whole world would be destroyed, by a deluge of waters. Abraham was informed, that his posterity would be servants in a strange land; that they would be afflicted and oppressed by a cruel nation, and that, in a limited time, they would be redeemed from servitude, and be brought to inherit the land of promise. Saul was notified, by the prophet Samuel, that his kingdom *should not continue*. The revolt of ten tribes from the house of Solomon, and their submission to Jeroboam, were foretold, by Ahijah, the Shilonite. The destruction of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar, and the captivity of the Jews, for seventy years, in Babylon, was predicted by Jeremiah. That Cyrus, the king of Persia, would take Babylon, and redeem the people of God from captivity, and assist them in rebuilding the temple, and the city Jerusalem, was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, above an hundred years before the events took place. Many prophets uttered predictions about the appearing of God's Son, in this world, to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and to die for the salvation of men. His person, character, mission, birth, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, were minutely described, many hundred years before the incarnation. And the prophet Daniel mentioned the exact time, when the Messiah would come from heaven, to make reconciliation for transgressors.

As the preaching of Christ and his apostles made a most surprising alteration, in the moral state of the world; so the friends of piety and virtue stood not in need of such frequent admonitions and predictions, from heaven, as were given to the ancient saints. And yet the New Testament is not wholly destitute of prophecies. Jesus Christ predicted his own death, and many circumstances relating to it. As God was determined to reject the posterity of Abraham, for their infidelity and wickedness, and to gather the Gentiles into the true church; so Christ gave the Jews information  
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of this event, awful to them, and glorious to the heathen world. Christ predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Romans, and the signs and prodigies, that would attend this dreadful calamity. A great and general apostasy from the christian faith was predicted, by all the apostles. Paul, in a particular manner, describes *the man of sin*, his impiety, and blasphemy, his signs, and lying wonders, and how he is to be destroyed. The New Testament is closed with a prophecy, unfolding to view a surprising series of most important and extraordinary events, relating to the christian church, the Roman empire, and other nations of the world, as far as the affairs of the world have any connection with the church of Christ. The prophecies, in this book, are more various and extensive, than any other, in the Bible. They extend from the time of John's being in Patmos, through all succeeding ages, to the final consummation of all things. They not only mention the most remarkable revolutions among nations, and kingdoms, and in the christian church; but they describe, with great precision, the exact times, when some of the most important events were to begin, and their continuance.

Against these prophecies, however, unbelievers are ready to raise objections, and say, *that the books were written after the events took place.* But, that the prophets, whose names and prophecies are recorded, in the Bible, lived and prophesied, at such and such times, there is as much evidence as the nature of the case will admit. That Moses led the Israelites from Egypt, and conducted them through the deserts of Arabia, are facts, as well authenticated, as that Manetho wrote the history of Egypt. Moses was a famous lawgiver; and so were Lycurgus, Solon, and Minos. And, that Moses gave laws to the Israelites, we have as much evidence, as that Minos gave laws to the Cretans, or Solon to the Athenians, or Lycurgus to the Spartans. Infidels give full credit to the histories and writings, that describe the laws and actions of these heathen legislators, and yet exert themselves to discredit the character, laws, and writings of Moses. On what evidence, it may be asked, do infidels believe, that these heathen legislators lived, and promulgated laws? We have their writings, it will be said, handed down to us, through the revolutions of ages, and authenticated by the best histo-



tians of antiquity. And have we not the writings and laws of Moses, transmitted to us, as safely and as purely? Have we not heathen writers, of undoubted character, to witness, that such a person as Moses redeemed the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and gave them a code of laws?

The posterity of Abraham have, ever, been tenacious of their religious rites and ceremonies, and, with the greatest care, have they preserved the sacred books of their great men. The writings of Moses, of Samuel, of David, of Isaiah, and the other prophets, were, ever, preserved, in the archives of the tabernacle and temple, as long as the nation continued together, in a distinct body. These writings are not of a late date. They were in being, more than seventeen hundred years ago, when Titus destroyed Jerusalem: For, they are particularly mentioned by Josephus, who wrote an history of this war, which he shewed to Vespasian and Titus, and received their approbation. These books were in being in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt: For, by his order, they were translated from the original Hebrew into the Greek language, and deposited in his famous library, in Alexandria. They were in being, when Alexander, the Grecian hero, conquered the Asiatic nations: For, when he appeared before Jerusalem, with his army, Jaddua, the high priest, met him, in his pontifical robes, and shewed him the writings of the prophets.

That the penmen of the scriptures are coeval with the most noted historians of heathen antiquity, is evident, from the last mentioned authors. In Herodotus, we have an account of the famous expedition of Xerxes, against the Grecians, as Daniel has described it. According to Xenophon, Belshazzar, king of Babylon, was slain, as Daniel had predicted. The victories of Nebuchadnezzar, over the Egyptians and Israelites, and the carrying away of the holy vessels, and the people of God, to Babylon, are noted by heathen historians to have happened, as predicted by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets. The death of Josiah, on the plains of Megiddo; the taking of Nineveh, by Assyages; the conquering of the Babylonian empire, by the Medes and Persians; the destruction of Sennacherib and his army; the actions of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia; and the destruction of the Syrian monarchy, by Tiglath Pileser, are mentioned, by the  
most

most celebrated authors of heathen antiquity, to have taken place, as the prophets of the true God had predicted, or as described by writers in their days. An ancient monument has been found, near the Straits of Gibraltar, on the African shore, with this inscription, "*We are they, who fled from Joshua, the robber.*"\* The actions of Gideon, who slew the Midianites, are mentioned by Sanchoniathon, a Tyrian writer, whose antiquity is attested even by Porphyry, a most bitter enemy to Christianity. Manetho has written a particular account of the time, the manner, and many principal circumstances, of Moses' conducting the children of Israel from Egypt, through the wilderness. Manetho, it is well known, is one of the oldest historians among the heathen. Numenius, a Pythagorean philosopher, has informed us, how Jannes and Jambres were chosen to oppose Moses, and hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many dreadful calamities upon Egypt, at the time the Israelites were preparing to leave the country.† The most famous writers, among the heathen, have acknowledged Moses, as one of the first and greatest lawgivers, that ever appeared in the world. To support this, we have the united testimonies of Plato, Polemus, Artapamus, Pythagoras, Theopompus, and Diodorus Siculus.

Such evidence, one would think, is enough to silence incredulity itself, and make Deists ashamed of asserting, *that the predictions, in the Bible, were written after the events took place.* If these gentlemen are versed in ancient history, they must know, that the most celebrated authors, of the highest antiquity, have, either expressly, or incidentally, mentioned the posterity of Abraham, and the principal circumstances of their history, from the days of Moses, to the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Romans. If they are unacquainted with ancient history, they are very unsuitable persons to make any remarks upon the subject, and their reflections, of course, deserve no credit. If they understand what ancient writers, whose authority cannot be disputed, have said, about the antiquity of the Israelitish nation, their laws, customs, relig-

\* See Dr. Stiles' Election Sermon.

† If the reader wishes to see a more particular account of the concurrent testimony of heathen authors, he may consult Dr. P. Allix's *Reflections on the Books of the Holy Scriptures*.



ion, wars, judges, kings, and revolutions, and yet would disguise the truth, by saying, *that the prophecies were written after the events took place*, we are constrained to view them as bold, impudent, assertors of what they know to be false. And are such men qualified to instruct the world? Men, whose effrontery will lead them to rise up against the concurrent testimony of both sacred and profane history, and palm that upon the world for truth, which they know, in their own consciences, to be destitute of even the shadow of truth.

That the Sacred Books are forgeries, originated by politicians and ecclesiastics, to impose on the common people, is an objection, which often drops from the pens of deistical writers. To invalidate the divine authority of the Bible is the apparent design of this objection. For, if the Sacred Books are forgeries, if they were written posterior to the events recorded, in them; then, the argument arising from prophecy, and its completion, is overthrown; and we shall, of consequence, have no proof, that God has ever given a revelation of himself to men. But what is the evidence, that these books are forgeries? It is certain, that no evidence can be gained from profane history. For the united testimony of heathen antiquity is directly against the assertion. And to suppose, that any man, or set of men, after the days of Moses, or David, or Solomon, or Christ, or the apostles, wrote these books, and imposed them on the world, and that the world have agreed to admit them as genuine, is the most absurd supposition, that was ever made. Supposing, for instance, that Dr. Gordon, in his history of America, had asserted that the Americans were descendants from the Turks, in Asia, that they emigrated about four hundred years ago, that they were professors of the Mahometan religion, and that they were subject to a kingly government, would his assertions gain the least degree of credit? Would not the present and future generations of Americans say, that this part of his history was destitute of truth? And, for similar reasons, it would have been said, that the five books of Moses were destitute of truth, if any man, or set of men, among the Israelites, or in the christian church, at any period whatever, had written and published them to the Israelites, or any other nation, upon supposition no such ac-

tions,

tions, as they relate, had ever existed. The forgery, at the first publication, would have been evident to all sorts of persons, and they would have united to reject the books, as an imposition on their senses. Had the children of Israel never been in Egypt, had no such signs and wonders been wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, neither Moses, nor any other person, could have persuaded that nation, at any time whatever, to receive the account as genuine. Supposing the books of Moses, of Joshua, and the kings, had been written by Ezra, or any scribe, during the second temple, and the subject matter of these books had been entirely new to the people, they would have risen up, as one man, against receiving the narration as authentic; neither would the people, at any time after, have agreed to admit the books as containing a faithful history of their nation. It is a fact, however, which cannot be denied, that the Jews, in all periods, have acknowledged these books, as being true. They have always considered them as sacred, and kept them as a trust of the greatest importance.

Similar remarks will apply to prove, that neither the writings of the prophets, nor of the evangelists and apostles, are forgeries. So many and so forcible are the reasons to establish the fact, that the books of the Old and New Testament were written, by the persons, whose names they bear, that every impartial mind will immediately assent to the belief. With as much propriety may we say, that Xenophon did not write the life of Cyrus, as that Moses did not write the books ascribed to him. The evidence, that the Bible contains a fair impartial account of the Jewish nation, from its original to the time of Vespasian, and of the christian church, from the birth of Jesus Christ to the time of John's closing the canon of Scripture, on the isle of Patmos, is as plain and as conclusive, to say the least, as is the evidence, that there were ever any such nations as the Assyrians, Grecians, and Romans. If the history, written of the Jews and Christians, may be challenged, so we may also challenge the histories of Strabo, Tacitus, or of any writer whatever.

That such a person, as Jesus Christ, appeared, in the land of Judea, in the Augustan age, that he was eminent for his virtue, and performed many surprising works, we have conclusive evidence from pagan authors; whose testimony cannot



not be rejected, as they were men of learning, had means to know the facts, and were most bitter enemies of Christianity.

The taxing of the Roman Empire, which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, is mentioned, by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion Cassius. The appearing of a new star, in the East, which led the wise men to Jesus, is recorded by Chalcidius. The slaughter, which Herod made of the innocent children, in Bethlehem, is frequently mentioned by Roman, and other, historians of that age. That Christ went into Egypt, as recorded by Matthew, and resided there for some time, is acknowledged by Celsus, one of the greatest enemies of the christian religion. Tacitus says, that our Savior was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, and condemned and crucified by him. That Christ performed many extraordinary cures and mighty works, out of the common course of nature, is confessed, by Julian the apostate, Porphyry, and Hierocles, who were heathen, and most virulent enemies and persecutors of the Christians. That Christ predicted many events, which came to pass according to his predictions, and that there was a miraculous darkness, and a very great quaking of the earth, when he was crucified, is related by Phlegon, the Trallian. That Christ was worshipped as a God by the Christians; that they would rather suffer death than blaspheme him; that they received a sacrament, and by it entered into a vow of abstaining from sin and wickedness; and that they had private assemblies of worship, and used to join together in hymns, are testimonies of Christianity, given by Pliny, the younger, who lived about seventy years after the death of Christ.

Infidels and opposers of Christianity, who lived in the first century, never presumed to deny the facts, recorded of Jesus Christ and his apostles, whose fame had spread all around the world. They acknowledged the existence of these persons, and the surprising works, which they did. But to ward off the evidence, arising from these facts, they imputed the power, by which they were done, to the influence of evil spirits.

As the ministry of Christ and his apostles was public; as their miracles were wrought in the open view of the sun, in the presence of many spectators, who were capable of forming

ing a right judgment ; and as men of the highest credit, among heathen writers, who lived in the time of these transactions, or very soon after, have related them as facts ; so there can be no objection against the accounts of the evangelists and apostles, if they are viewed only as histories of transactions, with which they were acquainted. Had the miracles, recorded in the New Testament, been the effects of legerdemain, or magical rites ; had the writings of the evangelists and apostles been forgeries ; had there been any deceit, or cunning contrivance, in the introduction and propagation of the christian faith, its implacable enemies, who lived at that time, who were men of sagacity and learning, and had means of information, and exerted all their ability to oppose its progress, would certainly have been able to detect the imposture.

No reasonable objection, therefore, can lie against the credibility of the gospel history. Its truth appears to be as well established as the truth of any history whatever. And we may, of course, believe, that the prophecies, it contains, were really spoken, by the persons, to whom they are ascribed ; and we may fairly reason, from their accomplishment, in support of Christ's divinity, and the true inspiration of the apostles. That such prophecies, as are recorded in the New Testament, were really uttered by Jesus and his apostles, and that they were, in fact, uttered prior to the events, we need not take for granted to be true. For, of their truth we have the most rational and conclusive evidence ; evidence arising from bitter opposers, and whose testimony cannot be called in question, without undermining the authority of all public writings and testimonials.



HAVING made some general remarks upon the nature of prophecy, and shown, that the sacred books, which contain many predictions of future events, are no forgeries, and frequent reference was had to them, by the best historians of heathen antiquity, and as it was impossible to have imposed them on the world, at any time of the Jewish, or Christian church, we shall, now, carefully examine some of the most noted prophecies in the Bible, shew their completion, and make a few reflections, as we pass along.



## SECTION I.

*Jacob's Prophecy of the Scepter.*

THE appearing of a Divine Person, in this world, to save men from the ruins of the apostasy, was the *burden* of all the prophets. Of this glorious person, and the time of his coming, the patriarch Jacob prophesied, when he said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10.) That this prophecy had a particular reference to the promised Messiah, and terminated in him, has been the general sense of all expositors, both Jewish and Christian. Although they have not fully agreed, as to the precise meaning of the words, *scepter*, *Shiloh*, and *the passing of the lawgiver from between Judah's feet*; yet they have agreed, that the whole verse was a prediction of the coming of God's Son, to erect a kingdom of truth and righteousness.

That we may have a clear idea of this prophecy, and reason conclusively upon it, we shall exhibit, in one general view, the several readings and expositions, which have been given of it. In his translation of the Bible, Arius Montanus renders the verse thus, "The rod shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and the nations yield obedience to him." The Greek Bible says, that, "The prince shall not cease from Judah, nor a general from between his feet, until those things come to pass, which are laid up in store for him." The Syriac Bible reads thus, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor an interpreter from between his feet, until he come, whose right it is, and the gentiles shall wait for him." The Arabian Bible reads the passage, in this way, "The rod shall not go over from Judah, nor a legislator from between his feet, whose even he himself is, and to whom the nations shall be gathered together." Jerome, in his Latin Bible, commonly called *the Vulgate*, says, that, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a general from his thigh, until he come, who is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of the gentiles." The Targum of Onkelos explains the verse thus,

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"The prince shall not be taken from Judah, nor the scribe from his sons' sons, even forever, until the Messiah come, whose is the kingdom; and to whom the nations shall be obedient." The Jerusalem Targum expounds, in this manner, "Kings shall not cease from the family of Judah, nor skilful doctors of the law from his children's children, until the time wherein the Messiah shall come, unto whom all the kingdoms of the world shall, at length, come to be subject. The Targum of Jonathan says, that, "Kings and governors shall not cease from the tribe of Judah, nor scribes to explain the law from his seed, until the time, that the king Messiah, the youngest of his sons, shall come, and because of him the people shall be dissolved."\*

The Bible has been translated from the original Hebrew into many different languages, and every translation of this text evidently points out the Messiah, as the person of whom the prophecy was uttered. The Jewish interpreters and commentators, who lived between the Babylonian captivity and destruction of Jerusalem, united, in sentiment, that the promised Messiah is the person intended, and that he was to come before the destruction of their state. To lessen the evidence arising from this prophecy, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, the latter Jews have, indeed, given it a different explanation. The concurrent sense of all christian expositors is direct in point, that the Son of God is the person intended by the prediction. And if Deists will grant that there was such a person as good old Jacob, that he spake the words under consideration, and that they are a prophecy, they must also grant, that the coming of an eminent person was predicted, and that he was to come before the dispersion of the Jews, among the nations of the earth.

By the *scepter's not departing from Judah, until Shiloh come*, we are to understand, that the tribe of Judah would continue together as a distinct tribe, having elders, rulers, and judges of its own, until the coming of the Prince of peace. During the whole economy of the Old Testament, Christ was the invisible king of Abraham's posterity. And the promise contained in Jacob's prophecy, is, that the tribe of Judah would remain together, having their own rulers, until

\* If the reader desire farther satisfaction, he may consult Bedford on the Trinity, Le Clerc on this text, and Bishops Newton and Sherlock on the Prophecies.



until the promised child should be born, who would *set upon the throne of David, and rule his kingdom with justice and judgment, even forever.*

The word, *scepter*, originally means the staff, or rod, of authority, which rulers formerly carried in their hand, as an emblem of their power. But this word is often used, by a known figure of speech, to mean a tribe, or collection of people, under a particular government. When the children of Israel were assembled for the choice of a king, Samuel says to them, *Present yourselves before the Lord, by your tribes* ; in the Greek Bible it is, *by your scepters*. God threatened Solomon to rend his kingdom asunder, but with this reserve, *I will give one tribe to thy son* : In the Greek Bible it is, *I will give one scepter to thy son*. Of the like import we might quote many other instances, if it were necessary. But these, with the preceding remarks, are sufficient to prove, that the prophecy gives a special promise to Judah, that he should not cease from being a tribe, or body corporate, having rulers and governors of his own, until the Messiah should descend from heaven, to establish a spiritual kingdom over all nations.

Having fixed the meaning of the word *scepter*, it of course follows, that the word, *lawgiver*, must be confined to such officers and rulers, as belonged to a single tribe only. Each separate tribe of Jacob's sons had its own prince, elders, and judges ; and this form of government continued, among the tribes, with a little alteration, until they were successively destroyed, or dispersed among the nations of the earth. That Judah, as a distinct tribe, should give laws to all the other tribes, was never the intent of the prophecy. And the tribe of Judah never assumed this authority, even when David and Solomon were kings of the whole nation. In pronouncing the blessing on the several tribes, Jacob says, *Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel*. And in this sense, only, did the lawgiver continue between the feet of Judah, until Shiloh came.

Having shewn, that Judah, according to the prophecy, was to continue as a distinct tribe, enjoying his own lawgiver, or having his own rulers and judges, until the limited time, until the coming of Shiloh ; and having also shewn, that by Shiloh we are to understand the promised Messiah, we

we shall, now, attempt to prove, that this prophecy has been literally, accomplished.

In proving this accomplishment, we shall consider the Bible, as a faithful, authentic, history, giving a true account of the tribe of Judah, from its first existence, in this capacity, to the coming of the Messiah. It is, then, evident, from the Bible, that Judah, as were the other sons of Jacob, was constituted the chief head of his own family, and that his immediate descendants were put under his authority, having rulers and judges chosen from among themselves. This distinction of tribes and separate authority had its rise, it is plain, in Egypt, when Jacob pronounced the blessing on his sons. After this event, and not before, they are mentioned as distinct tribes, having their own *elders*, or *heads of houses*, or *rulers of the congregation*. To prove, by mentioning particular texts, that the tribe of Judah maintained this distinction and authority, from the days of Jacob to the Babylonian captivity, is unnecessary; for the proof is apparent, wherever any thing is said of this tribe. Before this time, the tribe of Benjamin had incorporated itself with Judah, and the other tribes, Judah excepted, had been conquered and carried captive, into the east, by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria. From this captivity they never returned, a few excepted, to their own land, but were swallowed up in the nations, among whom they lived, and entirely lost all distinctions, as a separate people.

When Jacob prophesied, that *the scepter should not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*, it was implied, that all the other tribes should lose their scepters and lawgivers, before this time arrived. And the event, accordingly, took place. But Judah, as we have seen, maintained his distinction and authority, till the time of the Babylonian captivity. And, during the seventy years of being in the Babylonian empire, the tribe of Judah, it is plain, had their own princes and elders. By the direction of the prophet Jeremiah, the Jews *built houses and dwelt in them; they planted gardens and eat the fruit thereof*. During this captivity, they were subject, it is true, to the general power of the Empire; and yet they were permitted to live as a distinct people, to institute their own feasts and fasts, to appoint their own rulers and governors, and to re-



ulate themselves according to their own police. Both Ezra and Nehemiah make frequent mention of the *elders of the people*, and *chief of the fathers*, as managing the concerns of the nation. And when Cyrus issued his famous decree for the restoration of the Jews, he ordered, that the vessels of the temple should be delivered to the *Prince of Judah*. Thus evident is it, that they maintained their own distinction and authority, in the time of this long captivity.

After their return to their own land, and the rebuilding of the city and temple, they enjoyed, it must be granted, a less degree of liberty under the Grecian kings, who successively made them their tributaries. But even through these distressing times, they lived as a distinct people, had their own high priests, princes, and elders.

During the reign of the *Asmonean family*, it is apparent from the book of *Maccabees*, that a similar distinction of tribe and rulers, was in being. According to the testimony of Josephus,\* the ambassadors, who were sent, about this time, from Jerusalem to Rome, spoke in the name of *Judas Maccabæus* and his brethren, and the people of the Jews. These ambassadors formed with the Roman senate a treaty, and it is stiled *a covenant with the people of the Jews*. When a treaty was made with the Lacedemonians, the public letter was couched in the following stile, *Jonathan the high priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other people of the Jews*. And when Simon was made governor, authority was conveyed to him, *in the congregation of the priests and the people, and rulers of the nation, and elders of the country.*†

These examples are sufficient to prove, that the Jews subsisted, as a distinct people, and were not extinguished under the authority of the *Asmonean family*.

In this situation, the polity of the Jews continued till our Savior was born. At his birth, and for several years after, they had their high priests, rulers of synagogues, elders, and senate. The Roman government, it is true, had, in some respects, lessened their authority, in certain capital causes. But they were yet a free people. They enjoyed their own religion, laws, and rulers. To the Jews the Romans granted the same privileges, that they did to all other conquered nations,

\* Josephus contra Apion, lib. ii, sec. 11.

† Mac. xiv. 28.

nations, which was permitting them to retain their gods, and temples, and customs, and general laws, and allowing them to have certain officers, chosen from among themselves. By what the Jews said to Christ, "We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man," it is apparent, that they viewed themselves, as possessing all those civil immunities, which they had possessed, from the first beginning of their tribe.

By these remarks, it is evident, as any fact from history can be, that *the scepter did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came.* After the coming of Jesus Christ, the affairs of the Jewish nation began to assume a threatening aspect. Rebellions against the Roman Empire soon broke out; conspiracies and confessions arose among themselves; the Romans soon marched their armies against the Jews devoted to destruction, slew thousands of the people, laid their cities in ruinous heaps, overthrew Jerusalem and the temple, from their very foundations, and sold, in the open market, a very great multitude, for slaves. And thus the nation was dispersed, among all people, and have never, since this dreadful time, kept together, in one body, as a distinct people. They have had neither *prince*, nor *lawgiver*; nor can they shew any marks of the scepter's being among them. But wherever they live, they are the scorn and derision of people, wholly subject to foreign rulers, and esteemed as the refuse of the world. Their genealogies are lost; and of course the distinction of families destroyed; and, with all their knowledge, they cannot ascertain those persons, who, at the first division of the land, by Joshua, were owners of the different parts of the land of Canaan; and even the family of David is, at this day, utterly unknown.

From the remarks on this prediction, it is a plain inference, that Jacob was the subject of divine inspiration, when he declared what would be the future state of the tribe of Judah, until the coming of Jesus Christ. And, also, it is equally plain, that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. For, according to the prophecy, the scepter was not to depart from Judah, until the true Messiah should come. But, that the scepter has, long since, departed, is a fact, which no infidel can dispute; and consequently the Messiah has, already,



already, come. The scepter departed from Judah, very soon, after the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Romans, and hath been departed, for more than seventeen hundred years ; and we may, hence, conclude, that Jesus, who was born in Judea, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and crucified, when Tiberius was emperor, is the true Messiah. This conclusion is as fair as can be drawn from reasoning upon facts, recorded, in any history whatever.

Passing over many prophecies, contained in the Old Testament, we shall, now, give particular attention to those, which were uttered concerning the entire destruction of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt. If the prophets, whose names are mentioned with honor, in the Bible, predicted the ruin of these cities and nations ; and if they have been ruined according to these predictions, then, substantial evidence will appear, that they were the true prophets of the true God. That there were such men as Isaiah, Nahum, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who lived in the land of Canaan, in the days of Abaz, Hezekiah, and Zedekiah, kings of Judah, we have as substantial evidence, as that there ever lived such persons as Zoroaster, Socrates, and Plato. These prophets prophesied, one after another, concerning the disasters and final overthrow of the greatest cities and kingdoms of antiquity ; and they delivered their prophecies, many years, before the events took place.



## SECTION II.

### *The Prophecy of Nineveh's Destruction.*

THE entire desolation of Nineveh is mentioned, by Nahum, the prophet, who spends a whole chapter, in predicting this terrible event, and its attending circumstances. The prophet Zephaniah had in view the total ruin of Nineveh, when he prophesied, that *God would stretch out his hand against the north.* (Chap. iii. 13, 14.) Other prophets have occasionally predicted this event, as any one may see, who will carefully read the Bible.

Nineveh was a very ancient city, and the metropolis of the Assyrian Empire. Strabo says, that, "Nineveh was a city, greater

greater than Babylon." And Diodorus Siculus affirms, that, "Its builder, Ninus, proposed to build a city of magnitude, that it should not only be the greatest of cities, which were then in the world, but that none of those, who should be born after that time, attempting the like, should easily exceed it." Jonah, in his prophecy, says, that *it was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey*. Computing twenty miles for a day's journey, as was the ancient reckoning, this account of Jonah makes Nineveh to have been *sixty miles* in circumference. According to Diodorus Siculus, as quoted by Bishop Newton, the length of Nineveh was one hundred and fifty furlongs, its breadth ninety furlongs, and its circumference four hundred and eighty furlongs; that is, about twenty miles long, about twelve miles broad, and above sixty miles in compass.

This immense city, containing many thousands of inhabitants, and strongly fortified with walls and ramparts, was taken and destroyed, according to the prophecy of Nahum, by the Medes and Persians. And notwithstanding ancient historians disagree about the time when, and the king, by whom it was destroyed, yet they agree, that the event took place, in early ages. Diodorus Siculus affirms, that Arbaces, the Median, assisted by Belesis, the Babylonian, took Nineveh, and overthrew the Assyrian empire. This writer is very particular in relating the circumstances of taking the city. And, as his description casts light upon Nahum's prophecy, we shall quote a few sentences, and compare them with the prediction.

Diodorus says, that, "While all the Assyrian army were feasting for their former victories, that those about Arbaces, being informed, by some deserters, of the negligence and drunkenness, in the camp of the enemies, assaulted them, unexpectedly, by night, and falling orderly on them disorderly, and prepared on them unprepared, became masters of the camp, and slew many of the soldiers, and drove the rest into the city." In describing this event, the prophet says, "While they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." According to Diodorus, "There was an old prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river became an enemy to the city; and in the third year of the



the siege, the river being swoln with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for twenty furlongs ; then the king, thinking that the oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy to the city, built a large funeral pile in his palace, and collecting together all his wealth, and his concubines and eunuchs, burnt himself and the palace with them all ; and the enemy entered the breach, that the waters had made, and took the city." Foreseeing these events, by the spirit of prophecy, Nahum says, " That the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." And he also says, that, " With an overflowing flood he (God) will make an utter end of the place thereof." Diodorus says, that Arbaces carried from Nineveh to Ecbatana many talents of silver and gold. Of this plundering Nahum prophesied, when he said, " Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold ; for there is no end of the store, and glory out of all the pleasant furniture." To fulfil the prophecy, the city must be destroyed by fire and water ; and Diodorus says, that, by fire and water it was destroyed.

" But what probability, says Bishop Newton in speaking of this event, was there, that the capital city of a great kingdom, a city, which was sixty miles in compass, a city, which contained so many thousand inhabitants, a city, which had walls, according to Diodorus Siculus, an hundred feet high, and so thick, that three chariots could go abreast upon them, and fifteen hundred towers, at proper distances, in the walls, of two hundred feet in height ; what probability was there, I say, that such a city should, ever, be totally destroyed ? And yet so totally was it destroyed, that the place is hardly known, where it was situated."

All the travellers through the ancient Assyrian empire, and all writers, for nearly two thousand years past, who speak of Nineveh, agree in their accounts, that the place is scarcely known, where this famous city once stood. On the banks of the Tigris, they tell us, are vast heaps of rubbish, and many vaults and caverns, where the inhabitants suppose, that Nineveh was formerly situated.

So exactly have the prophecies of its ruin been accomplished. And yet it is conjectured, by very learned men, that these huge piles are ruins of the Persian, and not the Assyrian,

Assyrian, Nineveh. So faithfully has God verified the words of his prophets !

And, yet, in opposition to the united voice of the most celebrated and authentic histories, will Deists rise up and say, that the prophecies, in the Bible, are a set of forgeries. Of convincing such men there is but little prospect. The wavering and impartial may have light thrown into their minds. And for their sakes are these observations principally made.

Supposing, for example, that one man, or a number of men in succession, had appeared, two hundred years ago in Great Britain, and predicted, that, in a limited time, the nation would be wholly destroyed, and all the cities and villages would be laid so entirely waste, that no marks would be left, where they once stood ; and supposing, that the prediction was now literally accomplished, should we not have evidence, that they were divinely inspired ? The evidence, in this case, it is thought, would be so powerful, that even unbelievers must hold their peace, if they would sustain the character of impartial men. And yet the evidence, in favor of religion, arising from prophecies about Nineveh's total destruction, is equally as powerful. Length of time, it is a fact, does not invalidate the truth of these predictions : For we have the concurring voice of all antiquity, and of modern writers, and travellers, to authenticate the events.

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### SECTION III.

#### *The Prophecy of Babylon's Destruction.*

BABYLON, like Nineveh, was a very ancient, strong, and populous, city. And, being a most bitter enemy of the Israelites, it became the subject of many predictions denouncing calamities, and threatening its total ruin. This city is called, in scripture, *the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, the lady of kingdoms* ; and it is said to be *abundant in treasures, and the praise of the whole earth*. Its walls, towers, gardens, temples, with its beauty and magnificence, are so highly extolled, by heathen authors, that it may,



may, well, be reckoned the wonder of ages. According to Herodotus, the city had an hundred gates of solid brass ; which are also mentioned by the prophet Isaiah. Its walls, according to the above heathen author, were three hundred and fifty feet high, eighty seven feet thick, and so broad, that six chariots might go abreast, on their summit.

That a city, so strongly fortified as this, and the capital of a rich and powerful kingdom, would be, entirely, overthrown, in a short period, there seemed to be little human probability. Its destruction, however, was determined by God, and the time and manner of its desolation appointed. To the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Divine Being was pleased to give information of this astonishing event. Isaiah uttered his prophecy, about one hundred and sixty years, before the taking of Babylon ; and Jeremiah, about fifty six years. The taking of Babylon, and other desolations, brought upon the city, are related by Herodotus and Xenophon, who lived not far from three hundred years after Isaiah.

As these four men were writers of strict integrity, we shall compare the prophecies with the histories of the events, and see what evidence may arise, from the comparison, in favor of our holy religion.

That Cyrus, king of Persia, would be the conqueror of this great city, was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, about an hundred years, before he was born. By the prophet, God speaks in this manner : “ Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him : And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.—I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.” (Isaiah xlv. 1—3.) Xenophon, and all heathen authors, who speak of this important victory, agree, that Cyrus, the Persian, laid siege against Babylon, and took it, after surmounting many difficulties, and suffering many afflictions.

That various nations would combine to subdue this city, was predicted by the prophet Isaiah. “ The noise of a great multitude,” saith the prophet, “ a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations, gathered together ; the Lord of hosts mustereth

mustereth the host of battle." (Isai. xiii. 4.) In speaking of these nations, who were to go against Babylon, Jeremiah says, (ch. li. 27,) "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz." And, according to Xenophon, the army of Cyrus was composed of various nations, among whom were these very people, mentioned by Jeremiah. Before that Cyrus had subdued many kingdoms, incorporated them in the number of his subjects, and he now obliged their armies to march with his, to the wars against the Babylonians.

Foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, what terror this powerful army would bring upon the king of Babylon and his people, Jeremiah says; "The land shall tremble and sorrow.—The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds; their might hath failed, they became as women." (Chap. li. 29, 30.) According to Xenophon, this prediction was literally accomplished. By his history of the war, we are informed, that, after the loss of a few battles, the Babylonians were so disheartened, that they never durst face the enemy again; but retired within their walls, and there remained, until the city was taken.

The river Euphrates ran nearly through the center of Babylon. On each side of the river were constructed very high walls, that had gates of brass, and stairs, leading down to the waters, which were more than twelve feet deep. A city so fortified with walls and brazen gates, so well supplied with water from the river, and furnished with provisions to last the inhabitants for more than twenty years,\* could not have been taken by the ancient mode of fighting with spears and javelins. But the prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, being divinely taught, predicted the manner, in which Cyrus would be able to conquer his enemies.

As the Babylonians deemed their fortifications, on the banks of the river, stronger than those on the plain, and as they apprehended no danger from this quarter, on account of the depth of the water, so they kept the gates, in this part of the city, open, night and day. The turning of Euphrates, therefore, from its natural course, was the only mean, by which an entrance could be made into the city. And, accordingly,

\* See Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, lib. vii. p. 113.



cordingly, the prophets foretold this event, when they said :  
 " A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up."  
 (Jer. l. 38.) " I will dry up her sea, and make her springs  
 dry." (Jer. li. 36.) " That saith to the deep, Be dry ; and I  
 will dry up her rivers." (Isai. xlv. 27.)

According to Herodotus and Xenophon, Cyrus turned the natural course of the river into the lake and canals, which the inhabitants had dug on the plains of Shinar, to receive the waters, when the floods were very high. In this way he so entirely drained the river, that his army marched, with ease, in the channel, to the gates, on the banks of the river, and so entered the city. In this manner was accomplished the prediction of bringing a drought upon the waters of the river, and of drying them up.

That Babylon should be taken, in the time of a great feast and drunkenness, was foretold by Jeremiah. Knowing this event, by the spirit of prophecy, he speaks thus, in the name of the Lord : " For their heat, I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the Lord. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, and her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the king, whose name is the Lord of hosts. I have laid a snare for thee, and thou wast not aware ; thou art found and also caught." (Jer. li. 39. 57. and l. 24.) And, accordingly, we are informed, by impartial historians, that the city was taken, in the night, during a time of great festivity and drunkenness. And so devoted were the inhabitants to pleasure and intemperance, and inattentive to any danger from the Persians, that the enemy had conquered the extreme parts of the city, before those, in the middle, knew, that they had entered the walls.\* And then was fulfilled the prediction, that, " One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon, that his city is taken, at one end." (Jer. li. 31.) Belshazzar was the king. And the city was taken, on the night, when he and his princes drank wine out of the golden and silver vessels, which had been brought from the temple of the Lord, in Jerusalem, as mentioned by the prophet Daniel.

Could

\* This is the account of Herodotus and Xenophon. See also Rollin's Ancient History.

Could Isaiah and Jeremiah have, so exactly, described these events, and so long beforehand, except they had been divinely inspired? That these two prophets lived and uttered these predictions, years before the taking of Babylon, is as certain as that Xenophon and Herodotus lived after its reduction, and wrote histories of the event. And, yet, such is the inconsistency of infidels, that they credit the writings of these historians, and reject the prophecies as enthusiastic and fictitious. Such partiality is the effect of great blindness and opposition to the truth.

As these prophets predicted the circumstances of taking Babylon, and by what king and army the victory would be obtained; so they also predicted, that this renowned city would become, like a desolate wilderness, and that every sign of its ancient grandeur and strength, would be so entirely swept away, as to leave it the astonishment of future ages.

Of this desolation Isaiah prophesied, in the following words: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in, from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But wild beasts of the deserts shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses; and dragons, in their pleasant palaces." (Isai. xiii. 19—21.) The same sentiment is expressed, in the prophecies, to which reference is had, at the bottom of the page.\*

Surprising as it may seem, these prophecies have been literally fulfilled. Jerome, who was Bishop of Carthage in the fourth century of the christian æra, saith, that, "Babylon was converted into a park, in which wild beasts of various kinds were kept for the hunting of the later kings of Persia." In his commentary on Isaiah, he saith, (chap. xiii. p. 111, "We have learned from a certain Elamite brother, who came from those parts, that the royal huntings are in Babylon, and wild beasts, of every kind, are confined within the circuit of its walls." A German, by the name of Ranwolf, who travelled through this land, in 1574, saith, that, "This country

\* Isaiah xiv. 22, 23. Jer. l. 23—41, and li. 23—44.



country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and that, in the place, where the city is supposed to have stood, and all around, is nothing but ruin and desolation, and that poisonous creatures, lodging in the rubbish, are so numerous, that none durst approach nearer to it, than half a league, except during two months, in the winter, when those animals never stir out of their holes."\*

In his remarks upon the Turkish empire, Mr. Salmon observes, (vol. i. chap. 2,) "What is as strange as any thing, related of Babylon, is, that we cannot learn, either by ancient writers, or modern travellers, where this famous city stood; only in general that it was situated, in the province of Chaldea, upon the river Euphrates."

The remains of ancient Babylon, it is agreed by all modern travellers and historians, are entirely swept from the earth. So completely has God fulfilled his predictions, uttered by the prophets, concerning this magnificent city, once the glory and wonder of the world!

"By these accounts," saith Bishop Newton, (Differ. vol. i. p. 309,) "we see how punctually God hath fulfilled the predictions of the prophets, concerning Babylon. When it was converted into a chace for wild beasts to feed and breed there, then were actually accomplished the words of the prophets, that *the wild beasts of the deserts, with the wild beasts of the islands, shall dwell there, and cry, in their desolate houses.* Another part of the country is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing; so that thereby was fulfilled another prophecy: *Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness; a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.*" The place, thereabouts, is represented as overrun with serpents, and scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures, so that *their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces; and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and hissing, without an inhabitant; neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there.* When we find, that modern travellers cannot, now, certainly, discover the spot of ground, where this renowned city was, once, situated, we may properly say, *How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations? Every purpose of the Lord hath he accomplished against Babylon,*

\* See Newton on the Prophecies. Vol. i. p. 304.

lon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without an inhabitant. And the expression is no less true, than sublime, that the Lord of hosts hath swept it away, with the besom of destruction."

To prove the truth of the christian religion, such prophecies, and their accomplishment, are very powerful. Could Devils find such conclusive reasoning to support their infidelity, how would they triumph over the faith of Christians !



#### S E C T I O N IV.

##### *The Prophecies respecting Tyre.*

ACCORDING to ancient history, there were two cities, in Phœnicia, both of which were called Tyre. The ancient Tyre stood on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean ; and the later Tyre stood, on an island, at a small distance. Both were, formerly, places of great riches and renown ; and both were famous for their commerce and manufactures. For this reason, Tyre is called, by the prophet Isaiah, *a mart* of nations, the crowning city ; whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth. (Isa. xxiii. 3. 8.)

In the height of its prosperity and strength, the prophets were inspired to foretell the amazing calamities coming upon the city, and its final destruction. For their debauchery and pride, and their cruelty to the Israelites, were the inhabitants doomed to ruin ; and the city, to a perpetual desolation.

According to prophecy, the Babylonians were to be the first instruments of executing the divine vengeance on this wicked and devoted people. And, hence, we read, in the prophecy of Ezekiel, (ch. xxvi. 7—11,) "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings; from the north, with horses and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. And he shall slay, with the sword, thy daughters, in the field, and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls ; and, with his axes, he shall break down thy towers.—He shall slay thy



thy people with the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground."

In his book against Apion, (lib. i. sec. 20, and 21,) Josephus says, that Menander, the Ephesian, translated the Phœnician annals into Greek; which relate, that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre, during thirteen years, when Ithobald was king. And, as the siege continued so long, the Babylonians, of course, suffered very great hardships; which were predicted, by Ezekiel, in these words: "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled." These Phœnician annals, as Dean Prideaux has proved, in his Connection of Sacred and Profane History, (part i. b. 2,) exactly agree with Ezekiel's account of the time, when the city was taken, and by whom. These transactions relate especially to ancient Tyre, which stood on the continent. And, to every candid mind, it must give satisfaction, that we are able to prove, by ancient history, how exactly events have corresponded with the predictions.

Of the inhabitants of Tyre it was predicted, by way of advice, that *they should pass over to Tarshish*;\* that *they should arise and pass over to Chittim*; which has ever been understood, by learned men, to be the islands and countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea; and that *here they should find no rest*. Being the best navigators of ancient times, the Tyrians had planted many colonies, on the islands, in the Mediterranean; and on the sea coast, both in Africa and Europe. When, therefore, they were closely besieged, by Nebuchadnezzar, they would, naturally, convey away themselves, and their property, as fast as possible, to these new settlements. And, accordingly, Jerome, in his commentary on Ezekiel, saith; "We have read, in the histories of the Assyrians, that, when the Tyrians were besieged, after they saw no hope of escaping, they went on board their ships, and fled to Carthage, or to some islands of the Ionian and Ægean Sea." In another place, he saith; "When the Tyrians saw, that the works, for carrying on the siege, were perfected, and the foundations of the walls were shaken by the battering rams, whatsoever precious things, in gold, silver, clothes, and various kinds of furniture, the nobility had, they put on board their ships, and carried to the islands; so that,

\* Tartessus, in Spain.

that, the city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar found nothing worthy of his labor. And, then, was fulfilled the prediction of Ezekiel, who spake, (as if the event were past, as was usual with the prophets) concerning the disappointment of Nebuchadnezzar, when he should take the city. "Son of man," saith God to the prophet, "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled; yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service, that he had served against it." (Ezek. xxix. 18.)

Having fled to the colonies, from the victorious army of Babylon, the Tyrians *found*, in these places, *no rest*. According to Megasthenes, who lived, about three hundred years before Christ, and wrote the history of Nebuchadnezzar, this king, it is evident, pursued the Tyrians from one country to another, and suffered them to enjoy no tranquillity.

To all, acquainted with the Roman history, it is plain, that the descendants of the Tyrians, in Sicily and Spain, in Europe and Africa, were continually and greatly harassed, and finally conquered, by the Romans. And, hence, the prophecy, it is manifest, was fulfilling, in every age, and in every place, where these miserable fugitives fled for shelter. So faithful is God, to accomplish the words of his prophets!

That Tyre should return, after seventy years' captivity, to her former splendor and strength, was foreshewn, by the prophet Isaiah, in these words: "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years; and after the end of seventy years, Tyre shall sing, as an harlot, and she shall turn to her hire." (Isa. xxiii. 15. 17.) From the destruction of Tyre to the taking of Babylon, by Cyrus, was exactly seventy years. And, then, the Tyrians, with other nations, were delivered from the oppressive yoke of the Babylonians, and restored to their ancient liberties.

After the Tyrians were set at liberty from their oppressors, they built their new city, on the island; which, in the time of Alexander, the Grecian hero, was so strong and populous as to impede his victorious arms, longer than any other city whatever.

But, notwithstanding the strength of her insular situation, and her towers and walls, which, according to Arrianus, were one hundred and fifty feet high, and of the same thickness

fire



she was to be destroyed, by fire and sword. In subduing the insular Tyre, the conqueror of Asia removed all the stones and timber from the old city, to make a causeway to the island. And, by this mean, he not only became master of the new city ; but, he was also God's instrument, in carrying into effect the prophecy of the entire ruin of the city on the continent. In relating these exertions and conquest of Alexander, Bishop Pococke says, "It is no wonder, that there are no signs, of the ancient city."

That the insular Tyre is, now, become a ruinous heap, is the unanimous voice of all, who have visited this place. Mr. Maundrel, who went to this island, saith, "When you come to it, (the city,) you find no similitude of the glory, for which it was so renowned in ancient times.—On the north side, it has an old, Turkish, ungarrisoned castle ; beside which, you see nothing here, but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harboring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing ; and who seem to be preserved, in this place, by Divine Providence, as a visible argument, how God has fulfilled his word, against Tyre ; viz. that it *should be, as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.*"\*

Had the prophets lived, when each event, respecting Tyre, was fulfilling, and written an history of this nation, in all its periods, their narrations, for substance, would have been what they now are. It is plain, however, that they lived and prophesied, before the old city, on the continent, was taken, by Nebuchadnezzar ; or the new city, on the island, by Alexander ; or before any of the events, of which they spake, had an existence. To reject such conclusive evidence, a man must be very blind and obdurate.



## SECTION V.

### *Some Prophecies concerning Egypt.*

THAT Egypt would be conquered, by Nebuchadnezzar, was predicted, by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. When Jeremiah was in Egypt, he foretold the calamities, which the king

\* See Maundrel's Journal of his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 48, 49.

king of Babylon was about to bring upon this nation. In speaking of these calamities, Ezekiel says ; “ Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land ; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.” (Ezek. xxx. 10, 11.)

As Nebuchadnezzar was, specially, raised up by God, and furnished with talents and a powerful army, to punish the nations for their idolatry and wickedness ; and as he had served a long and hard service against Tyre, and had been disappointed in taking plunder, in the city, so the land of Egypt and its riches were given to him, to be the wages for his army. Of this gift Ezekiel prophesies, in the following words : “ Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus ; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled ; yet, had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service, that he had served against it. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon ; and he shall take her multitude and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army,—for he wrought for me, saith the Lord God.” (Ezek. xxix. 18—20.)

The fulfilment of these prophecies may be proved, by two authentic histories ; of which one was written by Megasthenes, and the other by Berofus, about three hundred years before the coming of Christ. By the former it is said, that Nebuchadnezzar conquered the greatest part of Africa ; and the other affirms, that, having adjusted his concerns, in Egypt, and committed the captives he had taken to the care of his friends, he returned immediately to Babylon, upon hearing of the death of his father.\*

To prove that Egypt was taken, by Nebuchadnezzar, as was predicted, the testimony of these two historians is sufficient. Other transactions, recorded in history, are believed on a less degree of evidence ; and no man is deemed credulous for giving his assent. To the evidence, in point, arising from these two historians, great weight is added by the testimony

\* See Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, note to p. 358, 359.



testimony of Josephus. In speaking of Nebuchadnezzar, he says, that, "Having subdued Cœlo-Syria, he waged war against the Ammonites and Moabites, and having conquered them, he invaded Egypt, slew the king, who reigned, and appointed another."\*

In prophesying of Nebuchadnezzar's conquering Egypt, and the consequences of the victory, Ezekiel says; "There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." (Ch. xxx. 13.) From the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present time, there have been kings, and princes, and rulers in the land of Egypt: But none of them has been taken from among the natives. Their rulers have, always, been of foreign extraction; and imposed upon them, by the kingdoms, to whom, at different times, they have been subject. As this fact is well authenticated, by history, so we have full evidence, that the prophecy has been fulfilling, from the time of its being delivered to the present day.

Nebuchadnezzar, as we have seen, conquered this country, and made the people his tributaries, and gave them a king of his own appointment.

When Cyrus, the Persian, overthrew the Babylonian empire, and succeeded in command, he marched, as Xenophon informs us,† into Egypt, and reduced the people to his authority.

According to the writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Diodorus Siculus, as quoted by Bishop Newton, the Egyptians were, ever, held in subjection to the Persian kings, till the Macedonian empire overturned that of Persia.

Without any opposition, the Egyptians submitted to Alexander, and to the whole race of the Ptolemies, who were his successors. So far is this from being assertion, without evidence, that every history of these times, abounds with the most ample testimony of its truth.

The authority of the Ptolemean race over Egypt, continued from the death of Alexander, about two hundred and ninety four years, and terminated in Cleopatra, who is so highly famed, in history, for her beauty, wit, and vices.‡

This country was, now, reduced to a Roman province, by the victorious arms of Octavius Cæsar, and continued in submission to the Roman government, during the term of

six

\* See his Jewish Antiquities, b. x. ch. xi. sec. 7. † See Xenophon's Cyropæd. b. i. p. 2, and b. viii. p. 137. ‡ See Prideaux' Connec. part ii. b. 8.

six hundred and seventy years, to the days of Heraclius the emperor.\*

At this time, Omar, the third emperor of the Saracens, invaded Egypt; defeated and expelled the Roman armies, and obliged the whole country to submit to his authority. The religion of Mahomet was, now, introduced; and Christianity driven out, which, in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, had been established, in the first ages of the christian church.

The government of the Saracens over Egypt, continued to the 1250th year of the christian æra; when the Mamalucs rose in opposition to the caliphs and sultans, and usurped the supreme command. This government, according to Dr. Pococke, began with sultan Ibeg, in the year of Christ, 1250; and continued through a succession of twenty four Turkish and twenty three Mamaluc sultans, to the year 1517.

Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks, marched his army, this year, against the Mamalucs,† gained a complete victory, and hanged, before the gates of Cairo, sultan Tumanbaï; and, thus, annihilated their dominion in Egypt.‡

In consequence of this decisive battle, Egypt was annexed to the Othman empire, and hath, ever since, remained in subjection to the grand seignior of Constantinople. It is governed by a Turkish bashaw, with twenty four princes under him, who are advanced from servitude to the administration of public affairs: "A superstitious notion possessing the Egyptians, that it is decreed, by fate, that captives shall reign, and the natives be subject to them."||

By this general account of the nations, who have ruled Egypt, from Nebuchadnezzar's conquest to this day, it is manifest, that Ezekiel was divinely inspired, when he predicted, that, "There should be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." The account is not supported by suppositions, nor assertions; but rests on the testimonies of the most authentic records.

Another remark upon Ezekiel's prophecy, shall close what we have to say about this nation. Foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, the future situation of Egypt, Ezekiel says; "And they shall be a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of

\* This is said on the credit of Dean Prideaux. See Ockley's History of the Saracens, vol. i. p. 344.

† The Mamalucs are captives from Circasia; carried to Egypt and sold for the purposes of servitude and pleasure.

‡ Bishop Pococke's Supplement; p. 30, and 49.

|| Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 394.



of kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations." (Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.) Subjection to tyrants is a direct mean of debilitating the human faculties, and of reducing any people to ignorance, contempt, and wretchedness. And as the Egyptians have been subject to foreign masters, for more than two thousand years, who have, generally, been cruel, despotic, and vicious, it is no surprise, that stupidity and laziness, thievery and treachery, have been predominant features, in their character. The prophecy, that *Egypt should be the basest of kingdoms; that it should not exalt itself any more among the nations*, has been literally fulfilled. To support this assertion we have the unanimous voice of all writers, who have, either expressly, or incidently, spoken of this nation. In describing the character of the Egyptians, the famous Thevenot says, that, "They are exceedingly wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypocrites—robbers, treacherous, and so very greedy of money, that they will kill a man for three half pence,"\* To the same purport is the testimony of Bishop Pococke. "The natives of Egypt," saith the Bishop, "are a slothful people, and delight in sitting still and hearing tales.—They are also malicious and envious to a great degree.—The love of money is so rooted in them, that nothing is to be done without money. They think that the greatest villanies are expiated, when once they wash their hands and feet.—Their words pass for nothing, either in relations, promises, or professions of friendship."

When we have the concurrent voice of more than two thousand years, to authenticate the servitude and baseness of the Egyptians, is it possible to disbelieve that Ezekiel was a true prophet? Incredulity, in this case, is evidence of great depravity of mind; for it proves not only mere opposition to the truth, but a determination not to be convinced by the plainest arguments.

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## SECTION VI.

### *Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.*

DANIEL's prophecies have been, so exactly, fulfilled, that many opposers of Christianity have asserted, *they were written*

\* See Harris's Collection, vol. ii, ch. viii, p. 429.

*written after the events took place.* This objection against Christianity was, first, raised by Porphyry : But, with all his learning, he was unable to support it.

Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, has been, justly, viewed as a conclusive argument, in favor of revelation. By this interpretation, were unfolded to sight some of the most important events, that were to happen in the four great monarchies of the world. And as he described, with such exactitude, these interesting scenes, it is evident, that he was under inspiration from the omniscient God. And to this source Daniel attributes the knowledge, which he had to give a just interpretation of the dream.

The king of Babylon had a dream, which perplexed his mind, and aroused him from his sleep. As the impressions made, by the dream, were gone from his mind, he sent for the wise men of Babylon to make known unto him the dream and its interpretation. Being unable to comply with the king's demand, Daniel, of the captivity of Judah, to whom God had revealed the dream and its interpretation, was brought into his presence.

"Thou, O king," says Daniel, "sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. The image's head was of fine gold, and his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest, till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them : And the stone, that smote the image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Dan. ii. 31—35.)

Having revealed to the king his dream, Daniel proceeds in giving the interpretation. The golden head of the image, was a representation, said the prophet, of the Babylonian empire, of which Nebuchadnezzar and his successors were the rulers. *Thou art this head of gold,* said Daniel to the king.

The account, which Daniel gives of the Babylonian empire, corresponds with the description of it, contained in an-  
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cient history. In his first book against Apion, Josephus hath quoted Berofus, who saith, that Nebuchadnezzar held in subjection Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, and by his exploits surpassed all the Chaldeans and Babylonians, who reigned before him. Philostratus and Megasthenes, as noticed by Bishop Newton, say, that Nebuchadnezzar exceeded Hercules, in fortitude and greatness of exploits, and that he subdued the greatest part of Lybia and Spain.

*The breast and arms of this image were of silver ;* and their being of silver was an emblematical representation, that another kingdom should arise after the destruction of the Babylonian empire, which should be inferior to it. That the Persian empire overthrew and succeeded the Babylonian, is a fact well supported by history. And although it was a strong and powerful kingdom, and extended its conquests and dominion over a great part of Asia, and a part of Africa ; yet, it never equalled, in magnitude and glory, the Babylonian. As the value of silver is inferior to gold, and as the silver breast and arms were an hieroglyphic representation of the Persian empire, so it was revealed to Daniel, that this empire would be inferior to that of Babylon. It was inferior in extent of dominion. It was inferior in the greatness of military deeds. And it was inferior in the bravery, magnanimity, and virtue of its monarchs. For, although the monarchs of Babylon are said to have been cruel and debauched ; yet, those of Persia were much more vicious and despotic. In his Connection of Sacred and Profane History, Dean Prideaux saith, that, "The kings of Persia were the worst race of men, that ever governed an empire." With this description agrees every writer, who has given an account of these kings.

The Macedonian was the third great monarchy, that existed in the world. As it overturned the Persian empire, so it exercised dominion over all those nations, who had been subject to it. The Macedonians, or Grecians, were distinguished for their brazen armor. They were, generally, called *the brazen coated Grecians*. And, hence, as *the belly and thighs of Nebuchadnezzar's image were of brass*, and as the Macedonians defeated Darius Codomanus, the last king of Persia, and usurped his government, so we may view this expression, as a proper figure to denote the Macedonian empire.

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According to Daniel's interpretation of the dream, the *brazen belly and thighs* of the image were a figurative representation, that *another third kingdom of brass* would arise, which should *bear rule over all the earth*. Alexander was the first king of the Grecian, or Macedonian, monarchy. He gained possession and dominion in all the known parts of the world. He ordered his subjects to call him *king of the world*. And historians tell us, that ambassadors came from almost all countries, either to congratulate him for his victories, or to submit to his authority. By these tokens of submission and adulation, he gave evidence of being ruler of both sea and land.

The fourth great monarchy was emblematically represented, by the *legs and feet* of the image. *His legs*, says Daniel, *were of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay*. The interpretation is in the following words: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: Forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces, and bruise: And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of iron; forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay; the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: But they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." (Ver. 40—43.)

The Roman empire, it is well known, succeeded the Grecian. And as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, so the power of Rome overcame and subdued all the nations, who had been, once, subject to the three former monarchies. The two consuls of Rome were represented, it is thought, by the two iron legs of the image; and the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was, at length, divided, were represented, by the ten toes.

In his interpretation, the prophet says, that the kingdom shall be *partly strong, and partly broken*. This circumstance was denoted, by the legs of the image, that *were part of iron and part of clay*. This strength and weakness of the empire was happily, expressed by this composition of iron and clay. I



was strong, as it conquered all nations. And it was weak, or broken, as animosities constantly existed between the patricians and plebeians, the tribunes and consuls. In the latter times of the empire, the armies created and deposed the emperors ; and, at public auction, they set the empire to sale to the highest bidder. The northern nations of Europe made frequent incursions, laid waste the Roman provinces, sacked and subdued Rome, under Alaricus the Goth ; and from these confusions and revolutions arose the German empire, which is but the Roman empire continued, in other hands ; and which, at this day, is known to be weak.

“ In the days of these kings,” saith Daniel, “ shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people ; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” (Ver. 44.)

The kingdom of Christ was erected, at the time when the Roman empire was in the height of its power and glory. The Messiah was born, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and he began to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. This kingdom of heaven is totally different from all the kingdoms of this world, in its nature, laws, service, character of its subjects, and its durability. Like a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, the kingdom of heaven was erected, by the immediate power of God, in opposition to all human authority, and in the midst of persecution and distress.

The kingdom of heaven was fitly represented, by *a stone cut out of the mountain without hands* ; for the christian church is the building of God, an house not made with hands. As a stone is noted for its durability ; so the kingdom of Christ will endure forever. And as the stone, in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, smote the image, and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth ; so the kingdom of Christ will smite and break in pieces the kingdoms of this world. The time will shortly come, it is plain from prophecy, when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever. (Rev. xi. 15.)

A view of these four monarchies was, again, represented to Daniel, in a vision he had of *four great beasts*, which came  
up

*up from the sea, divers one from another.* (See ch. vii. 3.) The first beast was like a lion; the second, like a bear; the third, like a leopard; and the fourth was dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly.

The first beast, being like *a lion*, and having eagle's wings, has been, generally, understood, by expositors, to be a figurative representation of the Babylonian monarchy. The king of Babylon is called, by Jeremiah, *a lion*, and he is said to *fly, as an eagle*. (Jer. iv. 7. and xlviii. 40.)

As the Persians were a fierce, cruel, and bloodthirsty nation, so they were, fitly, represented, in the vision, by *a bear*; which is a most ravenous beast. The Persians are described, by Herodotus, as *being proud, cruel, and exercising the power of life and death over slaves and the lowest of the people*; as *slaying them alive, and having a law, by which a whole vicinity must be destroyed, for the crime of one man*.

As the Grecians were to march through the Persian empire, with amazing rapidity and violence, and to destroy armies and cities, without much opposition, so they were, properly, represented, by *a leopard*; which is an active swift beast, and fears not to encounter *even the lion*, called the king of beasts. This leopard had four heads, which denoted, as writers on prophecy have proved, that the Grecian empire should be divided, after the death of Alexander, into four kingdoms. And, accordingly, this empire was divided between Cassander, Lyfimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus, who were Alexander's generals.

To the fourth beast no name was given, but that of being *dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly*; and *having great iron teeth, and stamping the residue with his feet*. As this beast was not only terrible and destructive, but divers from all before it, having ten horns, so it properly represented the Roman power, whose armies carried terror and death among all nations, and conquered wherever they went. In its republican form of government, it was divers from the other three great monarchies. In the latter times of the Roman government, this empire, according to history, was divided into ten kingdoms, which event was presignified, by the ten horns, belonging to this terrible beast.

From this short view of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and his vision of the four beasts, it is



very plain, that God made him acquainted with the events of futurity. The argument, in favor of Christianity, arising from Daniel's prophecy, is so conclusive, that the opposers of Christianity, in every period of the church, have exerted all their abilities to prove, that they were only a description of past events. From this sentiment of the opposers, it is, hence, plain, that the prophecy is evidence so conclusive, that to prove it was written after the events, is the only method to evade its force. But they may as well attempt to prove, that Tacitus wrote his Roman history, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, as that the prophecy of Daniel has been written since the destruction of the empires, of which he prophesied. That Daniel lived and uttered prophecies, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, is as manifest, as that Tacitus lived in the days of Vespasian and Titus, and wrote the Roman history. Infidels are, therefore, reduced to this alternative, either to believe in the divine inspiration of the scriptures, or to reject all evidence arising from history. The latter they dare not do ; and to the former they are wholly averse.

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## SECTION VII.

*The Prophecies respecting the Messiah, his Person, Birth, Character, Work, Kingdom, Life, and Death.*

THE Old Testament contains many gracious promises of the coming of a glorious person, to establish a dispensation of grace, and to redeem men from the dominion of sin. As these promises were all made, ages before Jesus Christ was born, and as they have had their full and complete accomplishment, in him, and in him *alone* ; so we have the most clear and rational evidence, that the ancient prophets, who predicted all the circumstances, relating to the Messiah, were divinely inspired. To exhibit this evidence, in full view, we shall mention, in order, some of these prophetic promises, and then shew, that they were all accomplished, in the person of Jesus Christ.

I. That the Messiah was to be a very illustrious person, was predicted by the prophets. This circumstance was predicted

dicted by the prophet Isaiah. Speaking of the future reign of righteousness, this prophet says ; "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Of the increase of his kingdom and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) In the most pleasing strains is the same illustrious person described, in the following words : "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots ; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord ; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth : And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." (Isa. xi. 1—4.) Of the same illustrious person the prophet Jeremiah speaks thus ; "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice, in the earth.—And this is the name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" (Ch. xxiii. 5, 6.)\*

II. According to the prophecies, this illustrious person was to be born, before the total destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, among all nations. This event was presignified, by the prophet Haggai, in these words : "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come ; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord. The glory of this latter house shall be greater, than that of the former, saith the Lord." (Hag. ii. 6, 7. 9.) The prophet Daniel fixes the exact time, when

\* The reader is desired to consult these texts ; Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16. Ezek. xxxiv. 23—24. Zech. ix. 9, 10. Dan. vii. 13, 14.



when the Messiah should be born. Referring to the Jewish captivity, in Babylon, he says ; “ Seventy weeks\* are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.” (Dan. ix. 24, 25.)

III. That the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, a descendant from David, and in the town of Bethlehem, was expressly foretold, by the prophets. Speaking of Christ’s appearance, the prophet Isaiah says ; “ Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL.” (Isa. vii. 14.) The place of his nativity is fixed by Micah, in these words : “ But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” (Mic. v. 2.)

IV. This illustrious person was to be distinguished, according to prophecy, by the performance of the most humane and astonishing works. This is clearly expressed, by Isaiah, in these words : “ Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them, that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.—Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped ; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” (Isa. xxxv. 3, 5, 6.) He was to *bear the griefs and carry the sorrows* of men. (See Isa. liii. 3.) This was accomplished, when Christ *went about all the cities and villages,—healing every sickness and every disease among the people.* For then, according to Matthew, was fulfilled, what was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses.” (Matt. viii. 17.)

V. In the prophecies, it was foretold, that the Messiah’s kingdom of truth and peace, would extend over all the world. The prophecies about the nature of the gospel kingdom, and its extensive influence, are so many, that we shall refer to a few only. To the Son the Father promised, “ I will

\* Seventy prophetic weeks were seventy years ; The time of the Babylonian captivity.

will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii. 8.) Describing the glory and extent of this kingdom, the prophet David says; "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." (Ps. lxxii. 7—11.) The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy contains a most animated and beautiful description of the extent, holiness, and tranquillity of Christ's kingdom on earth. The reader will find a similar description, in the second, eleventh, and sixty sixth chapters of the same book. Of all the prophets Isaiah was the most particular in speaking of the promised Messiah, and his reign of righteousness on earth. For this reason, he has been called the evangelical prophet. And for this reason, it is thought, he has been so shamefully abused, by deistical writers.

VI. That the Messiah would be despised, persecuted, and put to death, was minutely foretold, by the prophets; who also spake of many circumstances, attending these scenes.

1. That he would be despised, was predicted by Isaiah, in these words: "He shall grow up before him, as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: He was despised and we esteemed him not." (Isa. liii. 2, 3.) Of the same import are the words of the Psalmist: "I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they, that see me, laugh me to scorn: They shoot out the lip, they shake the head." (Ps. xxii. 6, 7.) The sixty ninth Psalm is evidently a prophetic description of the Messiah and his sufferings. And, accordingly, the royal prophet says; "When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach;—and I became a proverb to them. They, that sit in the gate,\* speak against me; and I was the song of  
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\* Among the Israelites it was customary for judges to hold their courts, in the gates of the cities. They are the persons here described.



of the drunkards.—Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness." (Ps. lxix. 10. 12. 20.)

2. That the people and rulers of the Jews, together with the heathen, would combine to oppose and persecute the Savior, was prophesied, by way of question, in the second Psalm: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth do set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed."

3. By the prophet Zechariah it was predicted, that the Son of God would be sold for thirty pieces of silver. Speaking of this event the prophet says; "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, A goodly price, that I was prized at by them! And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord." (Ch. xi. 12, 13.)

4. That he would be betrayed by his own intimate friend, was predicted, by the royal psalmist. Foreseeing, by the Holy Ghost, the deceit and treachery of Judas, David says: "Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (Ps. xli. 9.) "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." (Ps. lv. 20, 21.)

5. That vinegar would be given him to drink, is mentioned, in the sixty ninth Psalm. "They gave me also," says the prophetic king, "gall for my meat; and in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink."

6. That his bones would not be broken was foreshown, in the thirty fourth Psalm. Speaking of the particular care of God over the Savior, the prophet says; "He keepeth all his bones: Not one of them is broken." (Ps. xxxiv. 20.)

7. That the Messiah would be pierced is mentioned, in the twenty second Psalm; which is, generally, allowed to be a prophetic description of the amazing scene of Christ's crucifixion. Having this scene in view, the prophet says; "The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: They pierced my hands and my feet." (Ps. xxii. 16.) And the prophet  
Zechariah,

Zechariah, foreseeing the repentance of some of the Jews, for their inhumanity toward the Redeemer, says ; " And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced." (Zech. xii. 10.)

8. That the Savior's garments would be parted, was made known to the ancient saints, in the twenty second Psalm. " They part my garments among them," says the prophecy, " and cast lots upon my vesture."

9. That he would be put to death with transgressors, and be buried with the rich, was declared by the prophet Isaiah, in the fifty third chapter of his prophecy.

10. That he would rise from the grave, before his body saw corruption, was particularly mentioned, by the prophet David, in the sixteenth Psalm. " My flesh shall rest in hope," says David of the Messiah ; " for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ;\* neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

11. That he would ascend into heaven, was predicted in these words : " Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the king of glory shall come in." (Ps. xxiv. 7.) But the triumphant ascension of Christ to glory, is more plainly described, in the sixty eighth Psalm : " Thou hast ascended on high," says the prediction, " thou hast led captivity captive ; thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

Having stated the predictions respecting the Messiah, his person, and many circumstances of his life and death, we shall, now, shew, that they were all accomplished, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. And,

1. That Jesus of Nazareth was an illustrious person, is apparent from the history of his person and character, as contained in the New Testament. If as much credit may be given to the writings of the four evangelists, as is usually given to other biographical writings, then the son of Mary was, certainly, a very distinguished and extraordinary person. In his biography, written by the evangelists, it is said, that *he was before Abraham ; that he came forth and proceeded from God ; that God sanctified and sent him into the world ; that the*

*world*

\* Hades, or the grave.



*world was made by him ; that he is the light of the world ; that he is the way, the truth, and the life ; that he is the true Shepherd ; that he is the Son of God ; that he and his Father are one ; and that authority was given him to execute judgment.* The moral and social virtues so eminently shone, in Christ, that his most bitter enemies have been forced to acknowledge the rectitude of his heart, and the innocence of his life.

2. Without recurring to the New Testament, it is manifest from other histories, that *the Messiah was born before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews among all nations.* In speaking of some actions of Pilate's life, Josephus saith, that, "At the same time, there was one Jesus, a wise man, if at least a man he may be called. He was a great worker of miracles, and teacher of those, that were curious, and desirous to learn the truth ; and he had a great many followers, both Jews and Gentiles. This was the Christ, that was accused, by the princes and great men of our nation." (B. iii. p. 131.) That Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and that Jesus Christ was brought in judgment before him, is the testimony of Tacitus. Other testimonies, of a similar nature, might be quoted from heathen authors. But the quotations are needless. For that Christ was born, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and that he was crucified, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, are facts as well authenticated, as the most credible facts in the best histories. Augustus Cæsar was emperor of Rome, about seventy years before Jerusalem was taken by Titus. And Pilate was governor, about forty years before this event. And, of course, the prophecies, that Christ should appear before the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews, among all nations, have been fully accomplished. And, therefore, the men, who uttered these prophecies, were the true prophets of the true God ; for he only can give the knowledge of futurity.

3. According to the accounts of Matthew and Luke, the Messiah was born of the Virgin Mary. That Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost, before she was married to Joseph, is the testimony of Matthew. Luke says, that the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her ; and, therefore, her child was called the Son of God. That the Jews were exceedingly careful to preserve

preserve all the genealogies of their families, needs no proof. According to these, the Virgin Mary sprung, in a direct line, from David. And, hence, the angel says to Mary; "Thou shalt bring forth a son. And he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke i. 31, 32.)

By reason of the taxing made in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, Joseph and Mary, who were of the house and lineage of David, "went up from Galilee," says Luke, "out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem." And while they were in this city, Mary brought forth her first born son, who is Christ, the Lord. And then was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet Micah, that the ruler of Israel was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah.

4. To fulfil the prophecies, that were spoken of him, it behoved Jesus Christ to do works of a surprising and miraculous nature. And, accordingly, we find, that he gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, that he dispelled the devils, healed the sick, by speaking a word, that he cured the lunatic and palsied, the lame, the halt, and maimed; that he calmed the raging tempests, walked on the waves of the sea, told to a certainty the thoughts of men, and raised the dead. Credentials of this nature are ample proof, that Jesus was more than a common, ordinary man, that he was really the expected Messiah, the desire of all nations. With this evidence, Celsus, an ancient infidel, was hardly pressed by St. Augustine; and to evade its force was obliged to invent the scandalous story, that our Lord went down into Egypt, there learned magic, and so wrought all his marvellous deeds by the help of this art. A pitiful shift indeed! To deal in assertions and invent improbable stories, is customary with Deists, when solid arguments are urged against them. To prove, that Jesus is not their promised Messiah, the Jews roundly assert, that Jesus stole from the temple the name JEHOVAH, and that he wrought all his mighty deeds, by virtue of this divine name. But neither Jews, nor Deists, have been able to prove their assertions; and, of course, they are like the "baseless fabric of a vision, that leaves not a wreck behind."



5. The religion, which Christ preached, while on earth, and the kingdom, which he established, are of a spiritual and divine nature. In his sermons, he taught the most sublime doctrines of piety and morality ; and he inculcated, with all the energy, their importance demands, meekness of heart, resignation to the divine will, forgiveness of injuries, rectitude of conduct, benevolence towards all men, repentance of sin, and sincere love to the Supreme Being. This kingdom, when first erected, was, for smallness, like a grain of mustard seed. But it grew, flourished, and extended its branches over the face of all the earth. The gospel of this kingdom was preached, in the apostolic age, to all nations. And the time is hastening on, when, according to prophecy, all people will submit to Christ, as king, and the reign of righteousness will comprehend all the different tribes of men, in the world.

6. That the Messiah was despised, persecuted, and put to death, as was foretold of him ; and that all the other prophetic circumstances of his life and death had their full accomplishment, in him, is very plain from the most authentic documents.

The combination of the Jewish rulers against Christ, is, particularly, mentioned, by the four evangelists. By the same authority, we are told, that *he was sold for thirty pieces of silver*, and that Judas, his own disciple and *familiar friend*, betrayed him to be crucified. In recounting the circumstances of his death, John says, that *they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to his mouth ; that the soldiers brake not his legs ; that one of the soldiers pierced his side ; that the soldiers took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat*. And as he was suspended on a cross, it is plain, that *they pierced his hands and his feet, with nails*, as was usually done to those, who were crucified. That our Savior was crucified between two thieves is the testimony of Matthew and Mark. By Luke they are called malefactors. After Christ was dead, Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own new tomb, hewn out of a rock. That Christ was crucified and buried, is granted by unbelievers. But they deny that he rose from the grave. The fact of his resurrection is, however, attested by many credible witnesses ;

witnesses ; who were under no temptation to raise and support a falsehood. And, as they were competent judges, and men of the strictest integrity, so the truth of Christ's resurrection is supported, beyond any reasonable doubt.

According to the prophecies, the Messiah was to ascend into glory. And that he ascended into glory, after his resurrection, is asserted, by eleven persons, who saw him arise from this earth, and mount through the air, towards heaven, when the cloud of glory received him out of their sight. (Acts i. 9, 10.)

From this short view of ancient prophecies, respecting the coming of an illustrious person into this world, and from a view of the principal circumstances of his life and death, it is a plain inference, that the prophets, who predicted these events, were divinely inspired ; and it is equally as plain, that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. That so many men, in periods so remote, should concur, in describing the same future events, and that all their predictions should have their accomplishment, in Jesus Christ, can be accounted for only on the principle, that Jesus is a divine person, the Saviour of men, and that the prophets were taught, by him, to whom futurity is ever present.

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## SECTION VIII.

*The Prophecies, which Christ uttered, concerning his own Resurrection.*

THE resurrection of Christ is a principal hinge, on which turns the evidence to support the authenticity of the christian religion. If Christ were actually put to death, as the scriptures teach, and as Deists acknowledge, and if he actually rose from the grave, as Christians believe ; then, that the religion of the Bible is from heaven, is a consequence, which none can deny. If Christ did not rise from the grave, then the faith of Christians is vain, and the preaching of the christian religion is vain ; and the apostles are false witnesses : For they have testified, that God raised him from the dead. Yielding this point to infidels is overthrowing, from their foundations, both the Old and New Testament : For the types

and



and ceremonies, and promises, and prophecies, of the former dispensation, referred to the coming of the Messiah, and were to have their completion in him. But, if he rose not from the grave, then he is an impostor, and of course the whole scheme of the Old Testament is destroyed. And as the faith of Christians is built on a crucified and risen Redeemer, and as his resurrection is, so often, asserted, in the New Testament, it will of consequence follow, that, if Christ be not raised, this faith of Christians is a mere nullity ; and the religion of the New Testament, a piece of solemn mockery.

The evidence of Christ's resurrection does, hence, demand particular attention. To exhibit this evidence plainly to the mind, we shall,

I. State the predictions, which Christ uttered, concerning his own resurrection.

II. State the scriptural evidence, that he did, actually, rise from the grave. And,

III. Make some reflections upon the whole.

I. The predictions, which Christ uttered, concerning his resurrection from the grave, are contained, in the following quotations from the evangelists. "From that time forth," says Matthew, "began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Ch. xvi. 21.) "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men ; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." (Ch. xvii. 22, 23.) With a little variation, the same truth was predicted, in the following words : "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," says Christ to his disciples, "and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes ; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him ; and, the third day, he shall rise again." (Ch. xx. 18, 19.)

To save time, we shall refer to some texts below ;\* in which the reader will perceive, that Christ, constantly, spake of his death and resurrection, as events of which he had certain knowledge. The prophecies are plain and particular. They are delivered without any qualifying terms. And we have

\* Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 33. Luke ix. 22. xviii. 31.

have the testimony of three credible persons, that they were uttered by Jesus Christ.

II. We shall, now, state the scriptural evidence, that Christ did, actually, rise from the grave.

"In the end of the Sabbath," saith Matthew, "as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake : For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.—And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know, that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here ; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place, where the Lord lay.—And, as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and bowed him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said unto them, Be not afraid ; go, tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.—Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him : But some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Ch. xxvii. 1—18.)

In his account of Christ's resurrection, Mark agrees, in the main, with Matthew. He is, however, more particular, and says, that, "When Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.—After that, he appeared, in another form, unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country.—Afterward, he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them, who had seen him, after he was risen." (Mark xvi. 9—14.)

In relating the appearances of Christ, after the angels had told the women, that he was risen from the dead, Luke particularly mentions the journey of two of Christ's disciples to Emmaus, and Christ's walking and conversing with them, and expounding unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself ; and his opening their eyes, and their knowing him to be the crucified Redeemer. These two persons related



related this appearance to the eleven. "And, as they spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And they were terrified, and affrighted, and supposed, that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb. And he took it, and did eat before them. (Luke xxiv. 13—43.)

John mentions three distinct appearances of Christ to his disciples, after he rose from the dead; and his appearing once to Mary Magdalene, as she turned from the sepulchre. To his disciples he appeared, first, at evening, being the first day of the week: And shewed them his hands and his side. After eight days, he appeared again to his disciples, as they were assembled together in a private room, for fear of the Jews. To seven of his disciples Jesus appeared, the third time, on the sea shore of Tiberias, and eat and conversed with them for a long time. These four appearances of our Savior are circumstantially related, by John, in the twentieth and twenty first chapters of the gospel, according to him; to which the reader is referred.

We are told, by Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, (ch. i. 3.) that Jesus "shewed himself alive, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of *his disciples*, forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." In his first epistle to the Corinthians, (ch. xv. 5, 6.) Paul says, that Christ "was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren, at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present (time); but some are fallen asleep."

III. Having stated the scriptural evidence of Christ's resurrection, we shall, now, make some reflections on the whole.

Against the truth of Christ's resurrection, it has been objected, by infidels, that his disciples came, in the night, and stole away his body, while the guard was asleep. This report was first spread, by some of the guard; and it was well known

known for what purpose the story was invented. The high priests, it is evident, had conviction, that Jesus was, really, risen from the grave. And to prevent what they deemed the pernicious effects of his resurrection, they gave money to the soldiers, to pay them for raising a most scandalous and improbable story. It may, seriously, be asked, How did the soldiers know, that the disciples stole away the body, while they were asleep? By whom was this information given to them? Do men, in their sleep, know what others are doing around them? The fact is, altogether, improbable. The story has not even the color of truth. Beside, that the disciples of Christ should attempt to steal away his body from the tomb, is destitute of the least probability. They were a feeble, despised, and scattered band. They knew, that the high priests had placed, at the tomb, a guard of soldiers. They knew, that a very large stone was rolled against the mouth of the tomb, and sealed. And they might well know, that the seal could not be broken, and the stone rolled away, without making a great noise. Knowing all these circumstances, they must be sensible, that the body of Jesus could not be taken out of the tomb, and conveyed away, without being discovered, by the soldiers; whom they might well consider as being attentive to their duty. That the disciples of Christ should attempt, in this situation, to steal the body of their Master, is, hence, a most inconsistent and improbable undertaking. Its truth depends, for support, wholly on assertion and conjecture.

That Jesus Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, is a fact, acknowledged by Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, who was never thought to be friendly to the Christians. In speaking of Jesus Christ, he says, that, "He was seen alive, again, the third day after his crucifixion, as had been foretold, by several prophets."\*

After his resurrection, Christ made his first appearance to a few women, who had come, early in the morning, to the sepulchre, to anoint his body. That the body of Jesus was not in the sepulchre, these women had the testimony of their own sight. And being distressed, because his body was not there, they were told, by the angels, that he was, actually, risen. When they were returning to the city, to carry the tidings

\* Vol iii. b. xviii. p. 131.



tidings to his disciples, Jesus met them, in the way ; which was his first appearance, except his manifesting himself to Mary, at the tomb.

After this, and during the space of forty days, Christ frequently appeared to his followers, conversed with them, and ate in their presence.

To say, that these appearances were all delusion, or the effects of a heated imagination, is saying what cannot be proved. All the witnesses of the resurrection, appear to have been in the sober exercise of their senses. They were surprised, it is true, at the first appearance of their Lord. But the surprise arose from the apprehension, that he was a ghost, and not from any suspicion of deceit.

Should it be, still, urged, that the body of Jesus was stolen from the sepulchre, and that the pretended witnesses combined together to carry on the imposture ; it may be answered, that an imposture, in this case, is destitute of the least show of probability. One or two persons, it is granted, may frame groundless reports, and, for a while, escape without detection. But, that five hundred persons should enter into a combination of fabricating and spreading a known falsehood, that no one of the number should ever divulge the secret, and that the most bitter and vigilant enemies should never be able to detect the imposition, exceeds all belief.

When the report of Christ's resurrection was, first, spread abroad, it became his opposers to examine all the minute circumstances, and shew the world, in what the deceit lay. But no such examination was ever had. Neither the rulers of the Jews, nor any enemies of Christianity, at any time since, have been able to undeceive the world, by plain, solid, proof, that Christ did not actually rise from the grave. To make men believe, that Christ did not rise, that the whole scene was a piece of solemn mockery, their ears have, indeed, been filled with surmises, conjectures, and assertions ; at which weapons infidels are very expert. But asserting and proving, it is well known, are wholly different. To undeceive impartial men, to impress their minds with truth, when misled by error, something is necessary, beside mere assertion and conjecture.

During the apostolic age, the Jewish nation, it is manifest, gave a silent assent to the testimony of the witnesses. None  
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of their historians, nor cotemporaries, among the heathen ever attempted to bring any proof against the fact of Christ rising from the grave. Josephus, we have seen, confesses, that he did rise. The high priests and senate of Israel, to whom the apostles boldly declared that God had raised *him*, from the dead, *whom* they had taken, and by wicked hands had crucified and slain, might, it seems, have detected the imposture, if any there had been. But, instead of contradicting the evidence adduced, by the apostles, instead of making the least exertions to discover and expose the pretended cheat, they used only threatenings and scourgings.\*

To substantiate any fact a number of witnesses is requisite. If they are persons of veracity, if they have proper means of information, and are capable of distinguishing between truth and error, their testimony is admitted by impartial men, as sufficiently valid. Apply this definition to the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and it will appear, that the fact is amply proved. For the witnesses were persons of the strictest integrity and veracity. Amidst all the clamor raised against them, their moral characters remain unsullied. That they had proper means of information, is very evident. For they often saw their risen Lord, they conversed with him, they saw him eat, and, by the sense of feeling, they were fully convinced, that he had a real body. Except the apostle Paul, they were, it is granted, illiterate men. But illiterate men can as well distinguish truth from error, as men of letters. Their sense of seeing, and hearing, and feeling, is as keen, as is the sense of philosophers and metaphysicians, and their testimony, or deposition, to authenticate any fact, will be admitted as soon, as the testimony of learned men. No objection, therefore, can lie against the witnesses, because they belonged to the lower class of people.

As no objection can lie against the character of the witnesses; so neither can there be any against the number. During the forty days of Christ's being in this world, after his resurrection, he appeared, sometimes, to two persons, sometimes to seven, sometimes to the eleven apostles, and once to five hundred persons, of whom the greater part were alive, when Paul, in the year 56, wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians.† Should it be said, that, to put the truth

\* See Acts v. 40.

† 1 Cor. xv. 6.



of his resurrection beyond any dispute, Christ ought to have appeared publicly to the whole nation of the Jews, at some of their solemn festivals in Jerusalem, it may be replied, that had he made an appearance as public as this, yet neither the tongues, nor pens, of infidels would have been silent. For, if they will not credit the testimony of five hundred persons, neither would they credit the testimony of as many millions.

The witnesses testify to a fact, of which they declare, that they had particular, personal, knowledge. And this knowledge was obtained, not by one single appearance ; but by a number of appearances, through a series of forty days, in which time Jesus gave the most sensible and conclusive evidence, that he was really risen.

In the most solemn and religious manner did the apostles bear testimony to the truth of Christ's resurrection. To the omniscient Deity, who understands all the motives and actions of men, did they appeal, in bearing witness to the world, that he had raised up his Son from the dead. If they were impostors, if they asserted for truth what they knew to be false, they were, surely, a set of the greatest villains, that ever lived. But, when men of unblemished character, (and the apostles were certainly men of this character) appeal to God for the truth of their declarations, they ought to gain credit, and they will gain credit with impartial judges.

Their testimony was not given, in obscure and secret places. But they appeared publicly, in Jerusalem, before the great council of the nation, in the presence of his crucifiers, before the kings and rulers of the earth, and before vast concourses of people, wherever they went preaching the gospel, and boldly testified, that Christ had, often, appeared alive, after his resurrection ; and had commanded them to preach repentance and faith, in his name, to all nations.

In making this declaration, they could not be under the influence of selfish motives. They knew the pride and violence of the Jewish rulers. They knew the superstition and haughtiness of the heathen philosophers, and the ignorance and depravity of the common people. And, hence, they must rationally conclude, that, wherever they went, they would be exposed to contempt and persecution. In preaching the doctrine of a crucified and risen Savior, there was  
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nothing to gratify the curiosity of the philosophers, to please the vanity of the common people, nor to gain the approbation of Jew, or Greek. Poverty and shame, ridicule and hatred, persecution and death, were the consequences, the apostles knew, of boldly testifying the doctrines of the cross.

From the above considerations, it is plain, that Christ was put to death, that he was buried, and that he rose from the grave, according to his own predictions. And, hence, he was a true prophet; and the christian religion, of course, is of divine original. To invalidate all this evidence, something is necessary, beside ridicule and assertions.

## SECTION IX.

### *The Prophecy of Moses, respecting the Children of Israel.*

THAT the prophecies were written, after the events took place, is a noted deistical objection. Should it be granted, or even proved, that this is true of some of the prophecies; yet the prediction of Moses, respecting the past and present state of the Israelites, is not liable to this objection. In the twenty eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, there is recorded a prophetic description of terrible judgments, to be brought on the Israelites, on condition they should forsake the true God. And that these judgments are now executing on them, and have been executing, for about eighteen hundred years, can be denied by no person, who will compare the events with the predictions. Had Moses been a spectator of the calamities brought upon his countrymen, by the Roman armies, when Titus besieged Jerusalem; had he been within the city, and seen the miseries of the people; or had he lived, at any period since that time, he could not have described, more truly and precisely, than he has, many interesting events of his nation. And, yet, according to the most authentic documents, he lived more than three thousand years ago. And, therefore, he must have been divinely inspired.

The evidence, in favor of religion, arising from this prophecy and its accomplishment, is very powerful. To exhibit this evidence, in a clear light, we shall make some general remarks.



remarks upon the more important parts of the prophecy, and shew how the events, predicted, have been fulfilled.

Vespasian and Adrian, the two great conquerors of the Jews, both marched, with their Roman armies, from Great Britain to the land of Judea, and were signal instruments, in the divine hand, of punishing a wicked people. This circumstance was foreshewn, in the forty ninth verse of the prophecy. "The Lord shall bring," saith the prophet, "a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation, whose tongue thou shalt not understand." As the Roman armies marched from England to the Holy Land, they may be said to have come from *the end of the earth*. As a *silver eagle* was the military standard of the Roman armies, so an allusion was had to this circumstance, in prophesying, that they should come *as swift as the eagle flieth*. Between the language of the Jews and the Chaldeans there is a great similarity. But there is no similarity between the language of the Jews and Romans. And, hence, the Romans were *a nation whose tongue the Jews did not understand*.

The destroyers of the Jews were to be "A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favor to the young." When the Romans entered Gadara, "They slew all, man by man," saith Josephus, "shewing mercy to no age, out of hatred to the nation, and remembrance of their former injuries." In Gamara the same bloody scene was acted over. "For nobody escaped," saith our historian, "besides two women; and they escaped by concealing themselves from the rage of the Romans. For they did not so much as spare young children; but every one, at that time, snatching up many, cast them down from the citadel." The inhumanity and cruelty exercised, by the Romans, upon the miserable inhabitants of Jerusalem, exceeds all description.

Speaking of these calamitous times, Moses saith; "He shall besiege thee, in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land." (Ver. 52.) The Romans, it is well known, marched through the land of Judea, laid siege to the cities, and took them, one after another, till they made the whole land, like a desolate wilderness.

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"In the straitness wherewith their enemies should distress them," (ver. 53.) it was prophesied, that the Jews should suffer the greatest afflictions and distresses. And, accordingly, during the siege of Jerusalem, there were great contentions and tumults in the city; and a very grievous famine raging, without any control, and reduced the people almost to madness and despair. In their distress, the nearest relations and connections showed no compassion one to another. "Women," saith Josephus, "snatched the food out of the very mouths of their husbands, and sons of their fathers; and what is most miserable, mothers of their infants." If in any house, there appeared any semblance of food, a battle ensued, and the dearest friends and relations fought one with another, snatching away the miserable provisions of life." And then was literally fulfilled this prediction of the prophet: "The man's eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward his children, because he hath nothing left him in the siege; and the woman's eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter." (Ver. 54. 56.)

According to Josephus, many of the Jews killed, dressed, and ate their own children, when they were besieged, by the Roman armies. So great was the scarcity of provision, distressing was the famine, in the city, that all the social and parental feelings were banished from its inhabitants. On killing and eating their own children, the Jewish historian relates several instances. Not only the poorer sort of people were guilty of this barbarous, unnatural conduct; but persons of the first quality. And then were eminently fulfilled the predictions of Moses; "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters.—The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot to the ground, for delicateness and tenderness—she shall eat her children, for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee, in the gates." (Ver. 53. 56.)

Such havoc and slaughter should be made of the Jews by the Roman armies, that, according to the prophecy, *there would be left few in number.* (Ver. 62.) The destruction of the human race, brought upon this nation, by Vespasian and Titus.



tus, almost exceeds belief. Josephus says, that, in Jerusalem and other parts of Judea, they made prisoners of ninety nine thousand two hundred ; and put to death one million two hundred and forty thousand four hundred and ninety.

To complete their misery and destruction, it was prophesied ; “ And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships ; and there ye shall be sold, unto your enemies, for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” (Ver. 68.) When Titus had taken Jerusalem, he sent a great multitude of the captives into Egypt, and there sold them, in the open market, for slaves. Many of them perished, on board the vessels, while sailing into Egypt ; and thousands of them could not be sold, for the want of purchasers. So exactly has God, in his providence, fulfilled the prediction!

According to the prophecy, *they were to be plucked from off the land, whither they were going to possess it.* (Ver. 63.) To accomplish this prediction the whole nation must be disinherited ; they must be ejected from their houses, cities, and possessions. Some time after the death of Titus, the Jews rose in rebellion against the emperor Adrian ; who sent his armies to Judea, subdued the rebels, drove them from the country round about Jerusalem, and forbade them, on pain of death, to approach nigh to the place, where Jerusalem once stood. Ever since this victory and edict, the whole land has been in the possession of foreigners. A few wandering Jews may be found, in some parts of the country ; two, in one place ; and ten, in another : But they are not suffered to be the owners of any soil.

Being driven from their own land, the Jews dispersed themselves over the face of the earth ; and there is scarcely any nation, under heaven, where some of them do not reside. They live in North and South America, in the East and West Indies, among all the nations of Europe, and in many places, in Asia and Africa. This great dispersion of the Jews was particularly foretold, by the prophet, in these words : “ And thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other.” (Ver. 25. 64.) “ And yet for all that,” saith God, in the prophecy, “ when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant

covenant with them." (Ver. 44.) The Jews, wherever they reside, are a distinct people. They still maintain their own customs, religion, and language. The descendants of the ancient nations, the Assyrians, Grecians, and Romans, are at this day, wholly unknown. But the posterity of Abraham remain as a distinct people. Although, wherever they reside, they are subject to the laws of the respective nations; yet they do not incorporate themselves with the people, nor join in marriage, nor copy their manners. To this remark the Jews, in Spain, are an exception. The horrid courts of inquisition, in this kingdom, have obliged them to change externally, their religion. But, "In vain," says Limbroch "do the great lords of Spain, make alliances, change the names, and take ancient scutcheons; they are still known to be of Jewish race, and to be Jews themselves. The convents of monks and nuns are full of them. Most of the canons, inquisitors, and bishops, proceed from this nation." The love of money is the cause of this dissimulation. Rather than quit their possessions, and abandon the prospects of gain, they are willing to become the greatest dissemblers on earth. A like instance of dissembling cannot be found, in any history. That men should secretly retain their own sentiments of religion, and privately worship according to their own rites, and yet externally conform to the established religion, which is totally different from their's, and also be the ministers of this established religion, is a most surprising affair, and would be incredible, were it not known to be true of the Jews, in Spain. But this very impious and monstrous conduct was predicted by Moses, in these words: "And there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known." (Ver. 64.) The former Jews were acquainted with the gods and worship of the ancient heathen: But they knew nothing of the papal images and superstition. And, of course, the dissimulation of the Jews in Spain, is an exact fulfilment of this prophecy.

To represent, in a strong light, their amazing sufferings during their dispersion, it was prophesied, that among the nations, whither they should be scattered, they *should find no ease*, neither should the sole of their foot *have any rest*. (Ver. 65.) The history of the Jews is a history of oppression.



sion, confiscation of property, and banishment from one nation to another. They have been banished from England, and France, and Spain, and Portugal, and Bohemia; and recalled and banished again. Their property, as dear to them as their life, has been seized, in many places, and torn from them. With many kings, it has been a practice to lay heavy contributions on the Jews, whenever they wished to collect large sums of money. By these means have been fulfilled the prophetic declarations, that the Jews *should be only oppressed and spoiled evermore*; that *their ox should be slain before their eyes*, and they *should not eat thereof*; that *the fruit of their land should be eaten up by a nation, whom they knew not*; and that they *should only be oppressed and crushed alway*.

In many popish countries, the children of the Jews have been, violently, taken from their parents, shut up in convents and monasteries, and baptized, and taught principles of religion opposite to their own faith. In many places, the children have been retained, when the parents have been banished. At such proceedings humanity must shudder. We read them with a mixture of pain and pleasure; with pain, that innocent children have been torn from their parents' embraces, and exposed to a thousand sufferings and indignities among strangers; with pleasure, that God hath been faithful to fulfil the prophecy of his servant Moses, delivered in these words: "Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them, all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand." (Ver. 32.)

Of the unhappy Jews it was prophesied, that, "Their plagues should be wonderful and of long continuance." (Ver. 59.) These plagues began to be brought upon this devoted nation, when the Roman armies, under the command of Vespasian, first invaded the land of Judea. The vials of God's wrath then began to be poured upon a sinful people. And from that time to the present, they have continued pouring, for about eighteen hundred years, without any cessation. The afflictions, it is true, have been greater, at one time than another. But in every period of these eighteen hundred years, the Jews have been hated, and despised, and oppressed, wherever they have dwelt. Although the nations of the earth differ in their customs and religions, yet they have

have universally agreed to slight, ridicule, injure, and persecute these miserable fugitives. They have become the astonishment, the proverb, and by word of all nations.

The preservation of the Jews, among all nations, is properly a *standing miracle*; a miracle, against which the Deist can form no rational objection. That one nation should exist, so many hundred years, and suffer so many wars, and sieges, and famines, and pestilences, and massacres, and persecutions, and distresses, and not be exterminated, can be accounted for, only upon the principle, that Divine Providence is, constantly, exerted to put into execution the prophecies, uttered, by his servant Moses. These prophecies were delivered more than three thousand years ago; and God has been executing them, from time to time, during the eighteen hundred years past; and some of them are, now, evidently, carrying into execution. Such accumulated evidence is enough to amaze and convince all, except the inveterate foes of Christianity; who seem determined to resist all conviction.

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## SECTION X.

*The Prophecy of Christ, respecting the total Destruction of Jerusalem, and the Circumstances of this awful event.*

ACCORDING to the prophecy of Moses, the cities of Judea were to be destroyed, as we have seen, and the inhabitants expelled from their native land. As a faithful monitor, Christ also forewarned the Jews of the dreadful calamities, coming upon their nation, and particularly of the entire overthrow of Jerusalem. The predictions, which Christ uttered, about these interesting events, are recorded, in the twenty third and twenty fourth chapters of his gospel, according to Matthew. Mark and Luke take notice of the same predictions.\* As these two mention certain particulars, that are not contained in Matthew's account, so we shall consider the whole as one connected prophecy, and quote the words of each writer, as occasion may require.

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\* See Mark xiii, 1—20. and Luke xixth, xxi, and xxiii chapters.



As a previous remark, we shall observe, that the war with the Jews, which *left their house desolate*, began, in the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Nero, in the month of May, and in the sixty sixth year of the christian æra ; that the temple was burnt, on the tenth day of the month of August, in the year of Christ, 70 ; that the city was taken, on the eighth day of September, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, in the year 70 ; that the war against the city lasted about four years : But seven years were consumed, in finally conquering and destroying the whole nation.

As a sign of approaching calamity, Christ mentions, that the abomination of desolation should stand in the holy place. He exhorts his friends to take warning, when they should see this sign, and flee from the impending danger. "When you shall see the abomination of desolation," says he, "spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them, who be in Judea, flee into the mountains." (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16.) The abomination of desolation was, it seems, the Roman armies, with their standards ; which were silver eagles, displayed on long staves, at the head of each legion. As the Romans were given to idolatry and superstition, they used to worship these eagles, as so many gods, who led them to victory. And, hence, in scripture stile, they are called the abomination of desolation. To idolatry, and every appearance of it, the Jews had, at this time, a very great abhorrence. And, accordingly, "When Vitellius, president of Syria, was preparing to go through Judea, with his army," says Josephus, "some of the principal Jews waited on him, and entreated him not to lead his army through their country ; because it was contrary to their laws, that any *images* should be brought into it ; whereas there was a great many in his army ; meaning the eagles. And he hearkened unto them, altered his intention, and marched his army another way." As the abomination of desolation was the Roman armies, with their silver eagles ; the disciples might, therefore, well be alarmed, as soon as they should see these armies, with their idolatrous ensigns, appear, in a hostile manner, in any part of the land of Israel ; but especially might the alarm be great, as they should see them drawing nigh to the holy city.

As

As another prognostic of approaching ruin, Christ tells his disciples, that, "There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." (Matt. xxiv. 7.) It is said, in the Acts (ch. xi. 28.) that, "Agabus signified by the spirit, that there should be a great dearth, throughout all the world; which came to pass, in the days of Claudius Cæsar." Of this famine there is particular mention, in the writings of Josephus. He says, it was very severe, and that it happened, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. This famine is, also, mentioned by Dion Cassius, Suetonius, and Tacitus. The first and the last of these authors say expressly, that it happened, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar.

As to the pestilences, Josephus informs, that, about the year of Christ 40, there was a great pestilence, in Babylon, in which the Jews underwent extreme sufferings. In the sixty fifth year of the christian æra, there was a great mortality, at Rome. And, at the same time, there were other calamities, in divers parts of the Roman empire. "The gods made this year famous," says Tacitus, "by tempests and diseases. Campania was laid waste by a hurricane, which all around overthrew villages, and groves, and fields of grain. In which the violence of the pestilence destroyed every kind of mortal thing; the houses were filled with dead bodies, and the roads, with funerals; and no sex, nor age, was free from the danger."

As to the earthquakes mentioned, by Christ, we have evidence, from Tacitus, that they happened about the time, Christ predicted they would. This historian speaks of an earthquake, at Rome, in the reign of Claudius, and of another at Apamea. And he says, that there was an earthquake, at Laodicea, in the days of Nero. Three cities in Asia, says Eusebius, viz. Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, were overturned, by earthquakes. And Tacitus and Seneca say, that, in Campania, there were earthquakes, in the reign of Nero.

According to the testimony of heathen authors, it appears, that the prediction of Christ, in respect to the famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, was literally accomplished. And no one can tax these men, with partiality to the christian cause, or say, that they were combined with priests to carry on a religious deception.

As.



As the beginnings of sorrows, Christ forewarned his disciples, that they would hear of wars and rumors of wars.—That nation would rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. (Mark xiii. 7, 8.) According to Josephus, a great commotion existed, in Mesopotamia, in which more than fifty thousand people were put to death.

When Cumanus was governor of Judea, a great disturbance happened in his government, in the 49th year of Christ. In this tumult not less than twenty thousand Jews were slain.

These troubles, says Josephus, increased with amazing rapidity. In one hour's time, more than twenty thousand Jews were destroyed, in Cæsarea; and the city was emptied of its Jewish inhabitants. This destruction enraged the whole Jewish nation. They flew to arms, divided themselves into parties, and laid waste the villages of the Syrians, and their neighboring cities. Other cities and villages, at a distance, were plundered, and an immense slaughter was made of the people found in them. And the Syrians destroyed not a less number of the Jews. Every city was divided into parties, armed against each other; and the safety of the one depended on the destruction of the other. The days were spent in slaughter; and the nights, in terrors; which were shocking, beyond all conception. To see cities filled with dead bodies, those of old men mixed with infants, and scattered in all parts, was no uncommon thing.

Contentions were carried to such a height, at Scythopolis, that above thirteen thousand Jews were killed, in a short time.

After this, says our author, other cities rose up against the Jews, who were among them. They of Ashkelon slew two thousand five hundred; they of Ptolemais, two thousand. The Tyrians were equally enraged against the Jews. At Alexandria, fifty thousand lay dead, in heaps; nor would the remainder have been spared, if they had not petitioned for mercy.

These terrible commotions, fightings, and havoc of the human race, are what Christ calls the beginnings of sorrows. These were the wars and rumors of wars, and nation's rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, of which Christ spake to his friends. But the end was not yet. The Romans had not, yet, come against Jerusalem and besieged it; nor

nor were the people yet shut up for universal destruction. But the end was nigh; even at the door.

In predicting the omens of the great desolations coming on the Jews, our Redeemer says; "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. xxiv. 24.) According to Josephus, false prophets and false Christs appeared, in Judea, about the time, that commotions began to rise, and they carried on their deceptions to the final overthrow of the nation. Their appearance and delusions may, justly, be considered as the fulfilment of Christ's prediction.

About the year 46, a certain impostor, says Josephus, persuaded great multitudes, taking their effects with them, to follow him to the river Jordan, assuring them, that he was a prophet.

Affairs, says he, in Judea, went on continually growing worse and worse. The country was again filled with impostors and robbers, who had deceived the people. And by means of the crimes committed by these robbers, the country was filled with all sorts of impiety. And impostors and deceivers persuaded the people to follow them into the wilderness, where they said, they should see manifest wonders and signs, wrought by the providence of God. About the same time, there came a man out of Egypt, who said he was a prophet, and having persuaded a good number of the people to follow him to mount Olivet, he told them, that from thence they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his command.

Deceivers and impostors, says our author, aiming at changes and innovations, made the people mad, and induced the people to follow them into the wilderness, pretending, that God would there give them signs and wonders.

In relating the prodigies, that foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, the same author says, that impostors spake lies, in the name of God, and deceived this unhappy people. They neither attended to, nor believed, the manifest signs, foresignifying the coming desolation. But, like infatuated men, who have neither eyes to see, nor minds to perceive, they neglected the divine denunciations of coming wrath.

Of a similar nature we might recite many more accounts. But these are sufficient to authenticate the truth, that Christ was



was fully acquainted with the prodigies, that were to precede the destruction of the Jews.

In foretelling these distressing times, our Redeemer says ; " There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon earth, distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things, which are coming on the earth : For the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke xxi. 25, 26.)

That fearful signs and omens, resembling these, mentioned by Christ, appeared, about this time, is evident from the writings of Tacitus and Josephus. Tacitus says, that, " Prodigies happened, which a nation, exposed to superstition, and averse to religion, had neither power to expiate by victims, nor by prayers. Armies were seen to run together through the sky, arms rattling, and the temple to shine with the fire of the clouds. The gates of the temple were, suddenly, thrown open, and a voice, more than human, heard, that the gods were departing ; at the same time, there was a great movement, as of people departing."

In mentioning these fearful signs, Josephus says, that, " There was a star, a comet, resembling a sword, which hung over the city, and continued for a year. And before the rebellion, and before the war broke out, when the people were coming together, in great multitudes, to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month of April, at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and temple, that it seemed to be bright day ; which light continued for half an hour. Moreover, the inner gate of the court of the temple, which was of brass, and very heavy, and which was not shut in the evening, without difficulty, by twenty men, and rested on a basis, armed with iron, and was fastened by bolts, that went deep into the floor, was seen to open, of its own accord, at the sixth hour of the night. And, at the festival, which we call the pentecost, as the priests were going, by night, into the inner court of the temple, they first felt a shaking, accompanied with a great noise, and after that a sound as of a multitude, saying, Let us remove hence."

A few days after that festival, there appeared, says Josephus, a wonderful phenomenon, almost exceeding belief. And the account of it might seem fabulous, if it had not been

been related, by those, who saw it, and if the following events had not been answerable to such signs. For before sun set, chariots and troops, in armor, were seen carried up on the clouds, and surrounding cities.—But what is still more awful, there was one Jesus, son of Ananus, of low condition, and a countryman, who, four years before the war began, when the city enjoyed profound peace and flowing prosperity, came up to the festival, in which it is the custom for us all to come to the feast of tabernacles, who on a sudden began to cry out in the temple ; “ A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against this whole people. This was his cry, as he went about, both by day and night, in all the lanes of the city. And notwithstanding he was apprehended and severely beaten, by the rulers, yet he made no complaint, nor did he cease from uttering his mournful words.

Thus, according to Tacitus and Josephus, the prophecy which Christ uttered, about the fearful signs, presaging ruin to the Jews, was fulfilled. The latter historian has recorded them, as affecting signs, warnings, and presages of great calamities, coming upon the Jewish nation.

Many other circumstances, respecting the evils to be brought upon the Jews, were predicted, by Jesus Christ. He foretold, that many would apostatize from his religion ; that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached among all nations ; that his followers would be brought before kings and governors, and some of them be put to death ; and that all the calamities, of which he spake, would happen, before that present generation should have passed away. To prove, by the best testimony, that all these particulars had their existence, before the limited time, would be a very easy task. But we shall wave the subject, and pass on to consider the prophecy about the siege and taking of the city.

In foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ says, “ There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down ;” that, “ then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world, unto this time, no, nor ever shall be ;” “ these,” says Matthew, “ be the days of vengeance ; and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ;” that, “ the



days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ;" that, " Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ;" and that their house should be left unto them desolate.

That Jerusalem was taken, and the temple and city destroyed by the Roman armies, and that the whole nation suffered the most affecting and awful calamities, about the time Christ had foretold, is apparent, from the writings of men, who lived near those times, and of whom many were eye witnesses of these evils.

To the accomplishment of Christ's prophecy, Tacitus and Dion Cassius are substantial witnesses. They speak of the great calamities brought upon the Jews, and of Jerusalem's having been destroyed by Titus, the son of Vespasian.

Philostratus, another author of great credit, says, " That when Titus had taken Jerusalem, and filled all about it with dead bodies, and the neighboring nations offered him crowns, he said, he was not worthy of such an honor, nor had he himself done that great work. He had only lent his hand to the service of God, when he was pleased to shew his displeasure."

In his history of the Jewish wars, Josephus makes particular mention, that the Roman armies came into the land of Judea, and laid waste villages, towns, and cities, and spared neither old, nor young, of any sex ; but spread promiscuous death, wherever they went ; that they laid siege to Jerusalem, at length, and overthrew it from its foundations.

When Titus laid siege to Jerusalem, says our author, the city was full of inhabitants, by reason, that many thousands had come there, from distant parts, to keep the passover. The city, at this time, was strongly fortified, full of provisions and men, and appeared able and sufficient to have driven the Roman armies from their walls. But they were devoted to destruction. The city was full of tumult and disorders, of robbers and licentious men, of contentions and factions. John, a noted character, headed one faction ; and Simon, another. And when they were not fighting the Ro-

mans

mans from their walls, they were slaying and butchering one another. In their rage and madness, they burned many store houses, full of provisions, which brought on such a distressing famine, that they eat old shoes, leather, and girdles, carrion, and every filthy thing, that was to be found ; and thousands perished for want of food.

The famine, says Josephus, began to be severe ; and with the famine increased also the madness of the seditious. There could no corn appear publicly, any where, but those robbers came running for it. They also searched private houses. And if they found any corn, they tormented the people, because they had denied, that they had any. If they found none, they nevertheless tormented the people, because they supposed, that they had concealed it. A measure of wheat was sold for a talent ; and the people were driven to such distress, as to search the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung, which they found there. And many killed, and dressed, and ate their own children. With propriety, therefore, might these be called *the days of vengeance*.

Through one gate of the city, not less than one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies were carried out to be buried. Many were thrown over the walls of the city ; and hundreds were put into houses and caverns of the earth.

The city was, at last, taken, and the temple set on fire. And whilst the temple was burning, every thing, that could be found, was plundered ; and ten thousand of the wretched inhabitants were slain. Nor was there any regard had to age, or condition. But children and old men, profane persons and priests, were all slain, in the same manner. The Romans set fire to the city, and made the streets run with blood, to such a degree, that the fire of many houses was quenched with men's blood. The soldiers killed, till they were weary of slaughter. Thousands were sold, with their wives and children, and *were carried away as bondmen and bondwomen.\** And then was fulfilled the prophecy of Christ " And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations." (Luke xxi. 24.)

After an end was made of burning the city, and of killing and selling the miserable Jews, Titus gave orders, that they should

\* See Deut. xxvii, 68.



should demolish, to the foundations, the whole city and the temple. And the whole circumference of the city was so thoroughly laid even with the ground, by those, who dug it up, to the foundation, that there was nothing left, saith Josephus, to make those, who came hither, believe it had even been inhabited.

And then was fulfilled the prediction of Christ; "And they shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: And they shall not leave in thee, one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Luke xix. 44.)

Maimonides, a Jewish writer, says, that Turnus, captain of the army of Titus, did, with a ploughshare, tear up the foundations of the temple. And then was fulfilled an ancient prophecy: "Therefore shall Zion, for your sakes, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high places of the forest." (Mic. iii. 12.)

Is it possible to read the history of the Jewish wars, and the total destruction of the nation, and compare these things, with Christ's prophecy of them, and then deny, that he was a true prophet? For such infidelity there is no cure. With men of this description there is no reasoning. That Christ had a clear knowledge of the calamities, coming upon the Jews, is evident, from his predictions and their accomplishment. That he lived and prophesied, before the events took place, is manifest, from the most authentic histories. And, hence, that he was a true prophet, is a consequence, as fair as can be drawn from any premises whatever.



## SECTION XI.

### *The Prophecy of Daniel, respecting the Rise and Power of Antichrist.*

IN describing the *fourth beast*, or the fourth great monarchy of the world, which we have proved to be the Roman, Daniel says, that, "The ten horns, out of this kingdom, are ten kings, that shall arise; and another shall arise after

after them, and he shall be divers from the first, and shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws: And they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times, and the dividing of time." (Dan. vii. 24, 25.) Of the same power the prophet speaks, in the eighth verse. "I considered the horns," he says, "and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns pluckt up by the roots: And, behold, in his horns were eyes, like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."

The ten horns of which Daniel is speaking, in this prophecy, are considered, by the best judges, to be the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided. Bishop Newton, who was well versed in the prophecies, has enumerated these kingdoms to be, 1. The senate and people of Rome. 2. The Greeks in Ravenna. 3. The Lombards in Lombardy. 4. The Huns in Hungary. 5. The Alemanes in Germany. 6. The Franks in France. 7. The Burgundians in Burgundy. 8. The Goths in Spain. 9. The Britons. 10. The Saxons in Britain.

The Bishop of Rome has been, justly, considered as the little horn which came up among these ten horns, or kingdoms. In the hieroglyphic stile of scripture, a *horn* is used as the emblem of *temporal*, and not of *ecclesiastical* power. And, hence, although the Bishop of Rome was vested with great dignity and authority, he was not properly the *little horn*, until he had conferred on him the power and dominion of a temporal prince. By this donation and investiture, the *little horn*, or the pope, *pluckt up three of the first horns by the roots*; that is, he became possessed, in his own right, *principality, and dominion*,\* of three of the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire had been divided.

In speaking of this prophecy and its accomplishment, Sir Isaac Newton says, that, "Kings are put for kingdoms; and, therefore, the little horn is a little kingdom. It was a horn of the fourth beast, and rooted up three of his first horns. In the eighth century, by rooting up and subduing the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of Rome, he acquired Peter's patrimony

\* *Ut suo detineant jure, principatu, atque ditione*, are the words of the donation.



ny out of their dominions ; and thereby rose up as a temporal prince or king, or horn of the fourth beast. It was certainly by the victory of the see of Rome over the Greek emperor, the king of Lombardy, and the senate of Rome, that she acquired Peter's patrimony, and rose up to her greatness.\*

Before this, the *exarchate* of *Ravenna*, belonged to the Grecian, or rather Roman emperors, residing at Constantinople ; and it was the capital of their dominions in Italy. To possess himself of this territory, and to withstand Aistulphus, king of the Lombards, the Pope applied for aid to Pepin, king of France, who marched into Italy, fought with the Lombards, and obliged their king to surrender to the pope the *exarchate* of *Ravenna*, and other territories ; and Pepin conferred them on the pope and his successors, as a perpetual dominion. Zachary, the pope, had acknowledged Pepin, as the rightful sovereign of France ; and the king, to reward the see of Rome, for this kindness, put the pope in full possession of this temporal dominion and authority. Being thus made temporal princes, the popes, after this time, dated all their writings, by the years of their own advancement to St. Peter's chair.

Bordering upon the *exarchate* of *Ravenna*, was the kingdom of the Lombards, which refused submission to the popes, and caused them much uneasiness and vexation. To subdue these troublesome neighbors, and gain possession of their kingdom, the bishop of Rome applied to Charles, the great, son and successor of Pepin, to come with an army into Italy. Wishing to be on good terms with his Holiness, Charles complied with the request, marched with a great army into Italy, conquered the Lombards, and bestowed a great part of their kingdom on the pope. Charles, at this time, confirmed to the pope, the former donations of his father, and also made an addition of other territories and cities. This gift of Charles was made, in the seven hundred and seventy fourth year of the christian æra ; and that of Pepin, in the seven hundred and fifty fifth year.

Before this time, the senate and people of Rome had revolted from the eastern emperors. And they had submitted themselves to the popes, to be guided wholly by their will and

\* Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on Daniel, chap. vii. p. 74, 75, 76.

and pleasure, in spiritual things ; but would not allow them to exercise any temporal authority. But a new scene unfolded to view, after Charles, the great, had overthrown the kingdom of the Lombards. With his victorious arms he marched to Rome, and was received by the pope, bishops, abbots, and people, and chosen patrician of the city. To reward the church for this honor, and to ingratiate himself into her favor, he gave the pope leave, to hold, under him, the dutchy of Rome, and its territories. To this the people were obliged to submit. In a few years, however, they rebelled against pope Leo, imprisoned and accused him of many crimes. To decide this affair, Charles appointed a council of French and Italian bishops, in which he presided, as moderator. But, to the astonishment of the world, the pope, without pleading his own cause, or making the least defence, was acquitted, all his accusers were slain, or banished, and his Holiness was declared to be superior to all human authority.

After the death of Charles, the people of Rome rose, once more, against pope Leo. But Lewis, the king of France, son and successor of Charles, crushed the insurrection and confirmed the pope, in his temporal dominions. Soon after this, Leo died, and Paschal was chosen to fill the papal chair. At his request, Lewis again confirmed to the see of Rome the donations of his father and grandfather.

In this manner was laid the foundation for the absolute authority of the popes over the Romans. And thus *the little horn pluckt up three of the first horns by the roots*, and subdued three kings.

In conferring these temporal dominions and authority upon the see of Rome, Charles, the great, was a principal agent. And, to reward him for his good services, pope Leo III. caused, that he should be chosen and crowned emperor of the Romans ; which is the same as emperor of Germany ; For the German empire is only the Roman empire continued. And thus *the kings of the earth agreed to give their power unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* (Rev. xvii. 17.)

The former part of Daniel's prophecy, as we have seen, has been fulfilled in the pope, by his possessing himself of the *exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards*. And the



the *government of Rome*. His power, at first, was very small ; which was predicted in his being called *the little horn*. But it soon gained strength sufficient to pluck up, by the roots, three of the ten horns. In explaining the prophecy, Daniel says, that *he shall be divers from the first*. As a temporal prince, and exercising *temporal jurisdiction*, he was like the other seven kings, among whom the Roman empire was divided. But he was *divers* from them, in the *ecclesiastical* and *spiritual* authority, which he claimed and exercised over the consciences and souls of men. To no person, but the pope, can this prophetic description be applied. And to him it may be applied, with safety. For he alone has usurped and exercised both a *temporal* and *spiritual* authority over men.

The *little horn*, says Daniel, *had eyes, and a mouth, that spake very great things ; whose look was more stout, than his fellows*. The *eyes* of the *little horn* emblematically represented the subtilty, cunning, and policy of the bishops of Rome, to usurp dominion over men, in things both sacred and profane. For deep laid schemes, and sagacity and resolution to execute their schemes, they have surpassed any set of men whatever. By their high tone of authority, in decreeing articles of faith, in claiming supremacy over all bishops and kings, in thundering out their bulls from the Vatican, and excommunicating princes and rulers, and absolving subjects from their rightful sovereigns, and condemning heretics to punishment and death, they *have spoken very great words* ; and in them alone has this part of the prophecy been completed.

No character of men has ever assumed such dignity and superiority, as the popes. *Their looks have been more stout, than their fellows*. They have worn the *triple crown* ; they have appeared with the greatest parade and splendor, at their coronations, and in the solemn processions they have made on festival days ; they have claimed authority, not only over all bishops and ecclesiastics, in Christendom, but over emperors, kings, princes, and their subjects.

By claiming infallibility, as Christ's vicegerents on earth, and rising superior to all laws human and divine ; by ordaining articles of faith and modes of worship ; by requiring obedience to their decrees, that were repugnant to reason and scripture ; and by assuming the power of granting indulgences  
to

to commit sin, of pardoning the vilest wretches, and praying souls out of purgatory, the popes have spoken great words against the Most High.

Of the *little horn* it was prophesied, that *he should wear out the saints of the Most High*. To whom can this be applied, with so much propriety, as to those prodigies of cruelty, oppression, and persecution, who have filled St. Peter's chair, for more than a thousand years? How many wars have been declared against the true friends of Christ! How much have they suffered by persecutions, imprisonments, massacres, and the horrid court of inquisition! They have been torn from their connections and families, and dragged to prisons and dungeons, and stretched on the rack, or burnt at the stake, or made to linger out a miserable life, under the greatest distress and cruelty, because they would not comply with what, they deemed, superstition and idolatry.

To complete the character of the *little horn*, it was prophesied, that *he should think to change times and laws*. To all, acquainted with the doctrines and impious practices of the church of Rome, of which the pope is the head, it must be evident, that this prediction has been accomplished in him. By his sole authority, he has appointed feasts and fasting days, for which no example, nor precept, can be found, in the word of God. He has introduced new doctrines and new modes of worship, and imposed them on men. He has enjoined the worship of images, and praying to departed saints. He has invented the doctrine of purgatory, or rather revived the old heathen superstition of expiating sins, by suffering punishment, in the Tartarean regions. And, in various other ways, he has answered the description of changing times and laws, especially in religious concerns.

That *the people of the saints of the Most High*, God might not faint, under these discouraging predictions, it was revealed to Daniel, that *they should be given into his hands until a time and times, and the dividing of time*. According to the nature and genius of the prophetic language, a *time* is one year; *times*, two years; and *the dividing of time*, half a year. But a year, in the prophetic stile, means as many years as there are days in a year. And, as the Jews reckoned their year to consist of twelve months; and each month to consist of thirty days, so a prophetic year is three hundred and



and sixty years, computing each day to make a year. And, hence, according to this computation, which is allowed by all to be just, *a time, and times, and the dividing of time*, or three prophetic years and a half, make twelve hundred and sixty common years. So long, and no longer, is the *little horn*, or Antichrist, to reign, and continue in practising his wickedness and impiety.

About the duration of the reign of Antichrist, there is no dispute, nor difficulty. And could we determine, with the same exactitude, the time when he began to reign, we might also determine when he would be overthrown and totally destroyed. But *here is the faith and the patience of the saints*. God has not been pleased to reveal unto his people the exact time, when this mystery of iniquity, this man of sin, is to be destroyed.

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## SECTION XII.

### *Paul's Prophecy about the Man of Sin.*

IN Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, from the second to the eleventh verse, we have recorded a very famous prediction of a character, or person, about to exist, in the church, whom the apostle calls *the son of perdition*. A question had arisen, it seems, among the professors, at Thessalonica, about the coming of Christ, or his appearing, the second time, to judge the world in the last day. This day, it was thought by some, was just at hand. To rectify this mistake was a reason of writing this *second* epistle. In which he undertakes to convince them, that the day of the Lord Jesus, or his *second appearing* to judgment, was at a great distance; that, before this time, a very great and general apostasy would happen, in the christian church, which would be of long continuance, and be productive of most terrible evils. And, therefore, he says; "Let no man deceive you, by any means: For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all, that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he

be as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, that he is God.—And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed, in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he, who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them, that perish."

A candid examination of this prophecy will throw much light upon the *holy scriptures*, and afford evidence to believe, that they are, really, given by inspiration of God.

Before the coming of the day of the Lord, there was to be, according to the prediction, a great and general apostasy from the christian church. The prediction evidently points to the errors, corruptions, and impiety, introduced into the papal church, in faith, worship, and practice. Instead of worshipping God, in spirit and truth, the bishops of Rome, and their adherents, have introduced external parade and a great many insignificant rites and ceremonies. Not contenting to worship God through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator, they have introduced the adoration of saints and images. To pray to the Virgin Mary and other departed saints, as to intercessors with God, is both the doctrine and practice of the Papists. This is called, by Paul, in another place, *the doctrine of devils*. Instead of adhering to the pure and simple doctrines of Christ and his apostles, they have apostatized to the imagery and superstition of old heathen Rome, made shipwreck of the faith, and renounced the important truths of Christianity. By the celibacy of their clergy, they have forbidden to marry, and by their lents and other fasting days, they have commanded to abstain from meat, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them, who believe and know the truth. (1 Tim. iv. 3.) Wherever popery has prevailed, the free use of the Bible has been taken from the common people. They have claimed the right of binding the consciences of men, of prescribing articles of faith, and requiring implicit obedience to all their decrees. That *ignorance is the mother of devotion* is, with them, a favorite maxim. And, accordingly, they have used



all possible means to render the common people ignorant and stupid.

Sentiments and practices of this description are evidence of great departure from the faith. And the person, or church, who may have impudence enough thus to impose on men, thus to tyrannize over their rights and consciences, may properly be called *the man of sin, the son of perdition*.

To no description of men can the title, *the man of sin*, be more fitly applied, than to the succession of popes, in the church of Rome. Among the popes, there have been some of the most vile, cruel, and haughty men, whose characters have been notorious for dishonesty and treachery, cruelty and fraud, infidelity and debauchery, prodigality, covetousness, ambition, and pride.

Beside their own personal vices, by their indulgences, pardons, and dispensations, which they have claimed a power from Christ of granting, and which they have sold in a vile and scandalous manner, they have encouraged all kinds of debauchery and wickedness. Instead of inculcating on men the importance and necessity of holiness, they have countenanced all sorts of immorality. Many schemes have been invented by them to render an holy life needless, and to assure the most abandoned of mankind of salvation, without true repentance of heart, and reformation of life, provided they would pay for the indulgence of committing sin with impunity.

And, accordingly, in this corrupt church, the most horrid murders and assassinations have been encouraged, and their crimes forgiven, by paying a certain sum of money. The popes have granted license to commit lewdness, intemperance, theft, robbery, and every vice, to which the human heart is inclined. These vile practices make it apparent, that the bishop of Rome, with his successors in the papal chair, is *the man of sin, the son of perdition*.

In describing the character of *the man of sin*, the apostle speaks of him, as one, *who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, that he is God.* (Ver. 4.) To any one acquainted with the history of popery, it is no difficult task, to point out *stubborn facts*, which will fully answer this description. The popes have  
exalted

exalted themselves above all, that is called God, or that is worshipped. Neither the true God, nor any of the heathen gods, has assumed the titles, which the popes have assumed, nor claimed and exercised the authority, which they have. To grant indulgence to commit sin, is a power claimed and exercised by the popes alone. By claiming divine titles and power, his Holiness, with his successors, has exalted himself, and he has been called a god, who ought not to be called to an account; the supreme deity on earth; and some have risen so high, in their blasphemy, as to call him *our lord God, the pope*. And he has, ever, acted in conformity to this assumed power. By absolving subjects from allegiance to their princes, by fomenting and raising rebellions in states and kingdoms, and by deposing and murdering kings, and transferring their crowns and kingdoms to usurpers, the pope has exalted himself above all, that is called God. In their pride and haughtiness, the popes have called emperors their subjects. And kings and emperors have been obliged to hold the bridle and stirrup, while his Holiness was mounting his horse. Others have been commanded to bear up the skirts of his robe, when he was making a solemn procession, through the streets of Rome. By the approbation of popes, the clergy of the church have abused and opposed kings, and severely whipped princes. From the head of one king a certain pope kicked off a crown, when he was stooping down to salute his toes. And to shew his absolute and supreme authority, he has set his foot upon an emperor's neck. The popes of Rome have claimed the sole and exclusive right of nominating, crowning, and confirming the kings of Europe. By conducting themselves in this manner, they have given sufficient evidence to believe, that they are the very persons of whom the prophecy was delivered.

In Paul's time, there was an obstruction to the rise of Antichrist. And, therefore, the apostle says, *And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed, in his time.* (Ver. 6.) That Paul delivered these words, in a very prudent and cautious manner, lest he should offend the Roman emperors, who were then the *ruling powers*, is the general opinion of all protestant divines. And from this circumstance, as well as from other arguments, it is more than probable, that the Roman emperors were the obstructing power,



power, to whom the apostle refers. All the primitive Christians of note supposed, that the Roman emperors were the hinderance to the rise and authority of the man of sin. And for this reason, among many others, they used to pray most fervently for the continuance of the Roman empire. They believed, that if the Roman empire were overthrown, the man of sin would soon appear and practise all his horrid impieties.

To this purpose, Tertullian, a noted writer, in the second century, says ; “ Even now the mystery of iniquity is working ; only he, who obstructeth, will obstruct, until he be taken out of the way. Who is this but the Roman empire, whose division into so many kingdoms will bring on Antichrist ? And then shall that wicked one be revealed.” Mo- myllus Augustulus was the last emperor of the western empire. He was deposed in the year of Christ 476, by Odo- acer, king of the Goths, or Heruli. And then the *let*, or hinderance, to the rise of the mystery of iniquity, was taken out of the way.

Having intimated, that the Roman empire was the power, which obstructed the rise and prevalence of Antichrist, and that it would, shortly, be removed out of the way, the apostle continues his prophecy, and says, (ver. 8.) *And then shall that wicked be revealed.* On account of his oppressions and crimes he calls him, emphatically, *that wicked.* He had before called him *the man of sin, the son of perdition.* He now rises a step higher, and calls him *that wicked*, or, as it may be translated, *ὁ ἀνόμος, that lawless person.* With the greatest fitness, this title may be applied to the pope, who has been declared, by his adherents, “ to be subject to no law : But that he can, by the plenitude of his power, make right, wrong ; and wrong, right ; virtue, vice ; and vice, virtue ; that he can dispense with all laws, human and divine ; and that he may do all things above law, without law, and against law.”

Under the authority and protection of the pope, the greatest crimes have been committed. By his encouragement and influence, provinces, states, and kingdoms, have been overthrown. By his direction, kings, princes, and millions of the human race, have been put to death, in the most cruel and barbarous manner. The wars against the Saracens, called

called the holy wars, the destruction of the Christians in the valleys of Piedmont, the massacres of the Protestants in France, the Netherlands, in England, and Ireland, and the thousands, who have fallen victims to the inquisition, are evidence, that the pope is *that lawless person*.

“The coming of *that lawless person*, the apostle tells us, is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish.” (Ver. 9, 10.) By their monstrous stories, and by pretending to work miracles, the bishops of Rome, and their long train of priests, have confirmed the truth of this prophecy as applicable to themselves. They have asserted, that churches have been taken up, in one place, and carried, through the air, into distant countries. They have said, that their images have spoken, nodded, smiled, and frowned, on certain occasions. The stories, which they tell of the miracles wrought, by their preachers, are ridiculous and absurd, and they ought to sink into oblivion, were it not for the sake of illustrating the fact, that this prophecy is applicable to them, and has been accomplished, in their lying wonders. And for this purpose solely we shall mention a few of their incredible and lying stories. They tell us, that the first convert St. Gaul made, in Switzerland, was a bear; that St. Anthony of Padua preached to a vast assembly of fishes, which he had miraculously called together, to hear him preach the word of the Lord; that St. Francis preached, with great success, to birds and beasts, which he thought our Lord had commanded, when he ordered his apostles to go and preach the gospel to every creature.

Their invention of purgatory, and the methods used to make the common people believe in this fiction, are witnesses to the truth, that Paul had them particularly in view. To support this fiction, they have pretended, that dead persons have appeared to them, and entreated them, by prayers and tears, to pray their souls out of purgatory. And accordingly, with the most solemn mockery, prayers have been put up, to the Virgin Mary and other saints, for the release of souls, in the state of punishment. And they have pretended, that their prayers have been answered, and the souls released. Nay, to prove this doctrine, they have pretended to voices from heaven and hell, to cures at the tombs of saints,



or by the bones of deceased persons, to which they have ascribed the power of releasing sinners from purgatory. All the stories, and arts, and lying wonders, that could be invented, they have invented, to make the common people believe this doctrine. They have represented as martyrs, men and women, who never had an existence. They have enrolled, among the number of their saints, the most flagitious and abandoned men. They have patronised and sanctified murders, assassinations, massacres, treasons, and rebellions. And they have promised the actors of these horrid deeds, that they should not pass through the fire of purgatory, but have an immediate entrance into heaven, even if they should be killed in the commission of such atrocious crimes.

They have pretended to the power of the keys, or of binding and loosing. They have claimed full power to pardon and absolve, to censure and condemn, to open, at their pleasure, the gates of heaven, and to shut them against those whom they wished to exclude from happiness in the other world. And they have represented God, as bound to conduct according to their determinations. In consequence of this usurped power, they have pretended to pardon some of the greatest villains, who ever lived, and to condemn to endless misery the most innocent and virtuous men. And, yet, infidels will say, that Paul was not the subject of divine inspiration. That our apostle lived several hundred years before the destruction of the old, heathen, Roman empire, and the rise of Antichrist, is a fact well supported by history. And as he predicted the rise of *the man of sin*, or Antichrist, his haughtiness, blasphemy, errors, superstition, and lying wonders, it is a plain consequence, that he was a true prophet of the New Testament.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Strictures on Deistical Writings.*

THE name; *Deist*, has been usually assigned to one, who denies the Divine authority of the holy Scriptures. An infidel is a word of wider extent. To the denial of divine inspiration, it unites the denial of a God.

In the following pages, the words *Deist*, *infidel*, and *enemy* of revealed religion, will be used, to signify the same character.

*Deistical* writers have, by the appearance of argument, attempted to prove the Sacred Scriptures a fabulous production, the invention of men, not inspired of God.

The following strictures are made upon *deistical* writings, with a view, to aid the reader, in judging of the force of *deistical* assertions.

*Deists*, in general, open their attack upon Christianity, by ridicule. This is their mighty engine: And it is the most powerful, and, perhaps, the most successful weapon, they use, in their attempt to destroy the Bible. All persons can laugh, but all cannot reason. This mode of attacking Christianity, is designed to answer purposes, which can be effected in no other way. For ridicule is unanswerable. Who can refute a sneer? It is independent of proof, reason, or argument; and may be used as well against established facts, or even demonstration, as against falsehood. The use of banter and sneer is taking a station, quite beyond the reach of argument and reason. It is a weapon, which may be as advantageously employed, against true religion as false.

Ridicule is no argument. It is rather proof of the want of argument, and the weakness of a cause.

No man wishes to be indebted to ridicule, in support of a cause, who has it in his power, to command solid arguments: Consequently, ridiculing the holy Scriptures, is a substitute, in the room of fair argument, for no other reason, but because fair argument cannot be collected to support infidelity.

Nothing



Nothing is stronger proof of determinate refusal, to submit to the evidence of Christianity, than the method of treating it, with levity, ridicule, and vulgar witticisms.

The subject of Christianity *demands*, that its cause be tried upon its own merits. Christianity *demands*, that no attack be made against it, by any other weapons, than those of sober, and fair argument. Christianity *demands*, that its truth, or falsehood, never employ the pen of ridicule, or become a theme, for the exercise of wit.

In opposing Christianity, Deists have assembled all the follies, that have cleaved to the faith and practice of religious professors, and represented them, as so many doctrines of revealed religion.

This is an unfair and dissingenuous representation. The iniquitous practices of men do not originate from the doctrines of revealed religion ; but from the human heart. No man has any just right, to charge the wickedness of men to the pure doctrines of Divine Revelation. No man may infer, Christianity is false, because men are vicious.

Deists often insinuate, that Christianity is a fable, supported by interested priestcraft.

This is certainly a popular argument, against the truth of Divine Revelation ; and with many would be taken for a just and conclusive one. But, what is the amount of this insinuation, but a bold unwarranted assertion ? An assertion without proof, and without even the possibility of proof ? What connection is there, between priestcraft, and the truth of divine inspiration ? Admit the existence of priestcraft, and what then ? Is the conclusion just, that the holy scriptures are not the inspiration of God ? This would be saying, Because there is priestcraft in the world, there is no revealed religion ; which is as just reasoning, as to say, Because there are knaves, there are no honest men.

A considerable objection, Deists have raised against Christianity, is founded upon the equal confidence, with which the christian, mahometan, and pagan doctrines are received.

It has been urged, that Mahometans are as confident their religion is true, as the Christian is, that his religion is true ; and the Pagan is no less confident in his superstitions, than the believer in the Bible is, that the Bible was given by inspiration of God.

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The enemies of divine revelation say, Mahometans believe in the prophet of Arabia ; Pagans believe in the superstitious ceremonies of their country ; and Christians believe in the religion of the Bible ; and each of them receive their several religious tenets, with equal, and undoubting confidence.

Deists may say all this, whether the christian religion is true, or false, and it is an argument, which goes, as forcibly, to prove it true, as false : For it proves nothing.

To conclude, no religion is true, because many religions are false, is an unjustifiable conclusion ; a conclusion, which will not bear application. To exhibit this argument, in full force, let it be observed, *Deists* believe Christianity is a fable ; Mahometans believe in the Koran ; and Pagans believe in the worship of the sun ; therefore, there is no truth in the creed of the *Deist*, Mahometan or Pagan.

Deists, in making opposition to revealed religion, are driven into frequent inconsistencies.

In general, they reject the doctrine of miracles, because the facts said to be miraculously performed, do not agree with common experience. They believe nothing, unless the reported fact agrees with our own observation, upon the subject. According to this position, no fact can be rendered credible, unless it has taken place, within our knowledge : Consequently, the existence of frost and snow can never be rendered credible to men, who live in regions, in which frost and snow have had no existence.

Some *bolder*, and more *inconsiderate Deists*, have asserted, that whole tribes of Indians have sprung up from the earth, in the manner, insects and other worms are generated. Assertions, of this kind, are doubtless made, with intentions, to destroy the Mosaic account, concerning the origin of the human race. But no human testimony has ever appeared, to ascertain this fact ; and had it been attested, by numerous, respectable witnesses, it could not be made credible, according to deistical assertions. For we have never seen any instance of the like nature. It contradicts all our experience. Into such absurdities and inconsistencies, Deists lead themselves, in opposing revealed religion ; a plain evidence, their path is crooked, and is directed by wild conjecture.



An inconsistency, running throughout infidelity, is, acting in opposition to Christianity, with a confidence, which nothing, but proof and demonstration, can justify. Infidels discover a bold, profane and daring spirit. They fear not to speak of sacred things with indecent freedom. They are decided in their declarations. They even employ considerable zeal, in venting their hatred against the Bible; in disseminating deistical sentiments; in pressing upon men their objections to revealed religion; and in attempts, to impress the ignorant with apprehensions unfavorable to the holy scriptures. *Zeal!* it may be asked, for what? For the removal of all moral obligations. *Zeal!* for removing all the guards of virtuous practice. *Zeal!* for opening all the flood gates of iniquity. *Zeal!* for placing men back, in the shades of heathenism.

The inconsistency of this *confident zeal* is seen, more fully, by comparing it, with what, in general, is deemed human prudence, in other matters. Considering the claim the Bible makes to divine inspiration, the nature and magnitude of the subject, about which it treats, and the unavoidable ruinous consequences of rejecting it, in case it proves true; the confirmed disuse of it, and fixed habit of treating it as a book of lies, require certain, positive evidence, of its forgery and falsehood. But where, it may be demanded, is this plenary evidence? Who is in possession of it? What champion, among ancient, or modern infidels, has been able to substantiate the fact, that the holy Bible is a fable? For no man can prove it, to be inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, to make the revelation contained in the holy Scriptures. There is nothing in the works of creation, inconsistent with God's giving men such a revelation. The likeness, between the constitution of nature, and the revelation contained in the Bible, justifies the conclusion, that the Author of nature, is the author of the holy Scriptures.

As the possibility of God's giving men a revelation cannot be denied; so neither can any man prove, God has not done it. It is impossible, to make it appear, God has not inspired men, in the manner the holy Scriptures teach us, God has made communications to men. The christian records tell us: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

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"That holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

No man has it in his power to prove, the Bible is not a true, consistent book, deserving the name of divine inspiration. The principal facts, written in the Sacred Scriptures, cannot be proved false. They are better attested than those of any ancient history now extant. All the persons, and places, kingdoms and nations, doings and works, recorded in the Sacred Writings, had existence, in the manner and time, they are represented. Who is able to make out the proof, that the history of the Bible is not genuine and authentic? Further, it is not possible to prove, that all the usual objections, against the Bible, cannot be reconciled with truth. Deists have objected to the truth of Divine Revelation, on account of what they are pleased to call, inelegance of style. The force of this objection is lost, when it is considered, the inspiration of a book, is not to be determined by its style, but by its fitness, to answer the end, for which it was intended. The Bible makes no pretensions of teaching in neatness and elegance of style. It professes to instruct men, in the great concerns of morality and piety: And its language was accommodated to the genius of the nation, to which it was originally communicated, it answered the purposes of its design.

Language has varied and improved. Men of discernment do not condemn the manner of ancient writing, because it does not correspond to the manner of writing, now in use.

In justice to the style of the Bible, it must be observed, that many passages in it, are written in language truly beautiful and sublime.

The obscurity of some parts of the Bible, is made an objection, against its divine authority. Whether there is any weight in this objection, must be determined, from considerations, respecting the language of the Bible, and the nature of the subject, upon which it treats. In writings so ancient, as those of the Bible are confessed to be, some obscurity must be expected. The Bible was originally written, in languages, long since dead. But had it have been written, in our own language, and in our own time, some obscurity might have been expected. The subjects treated upon justify



fy this expectation. Some of them are sublime, some of them are incomprehensible, and some of them are prophetic.

In favor of the inspired writings, it is observed, this obscurity generally lies in what is circumstantial ; and not so much in that, which is really essential.

Deists are pleased to consider the trivial nature of some parts of the holy Scriptures, as a real objection to their divine authority. They say, there is too much exactness paid, to small, trifling things ; while others, more important, and necessary to be known, are omitted.

This objection vanishes, when it is considered, the recording of that, which is now deemed minute and trifling, might be useful to them, for whom it was immediately designed.

A considerable objection, Deists urge against the divine authority of the holy Scriptures, is, the imperfect publication of revealed religion. Some of them have said, that if Christianity had been the religion of all nations, they should not have hesitated, about receiving it, as a revelation from God ; but since it is not necessary for all men, they say, it is not necessary for any man.

The sufficiency of human reason, is the leading sentiment in Deism. This is the main ground, on which Deists proceed, in rejecting revealed religion. Reason, exalted into the place of revelation, is the occasion of innumerable errors, in them, who receive the Bible, as the inspiration of God. Reason, the sole guide of Deists, conducts them, into the region of infidelity.

Objections against revealed religion, on account of its want of universality, are made, upon the ground of God's being under obligation, to give all men, equally, the means of present, and future happiness. This notion contradicts all our experience, upon this subject. It admits a doubt, whether any two individuals, of the human race, have been placed, in exactly the same situation, in regard to the means of happiness.

“ In all the dispensations of Providence, with which we are acquainted, benefits are distributed in a similar manner ; health and strength, sense and science, wealth and power, are all bestowed on individuals and communities, in different degrees and at different times.”\*

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The communication of revealed religion to some, and not to others, agrees with experience, reason, and the light of nature. Moreover, it is an inquiry, deserving the attention of the serious, how far the want of universality, in revealed religion, is owing to the fault of men.

Quitting, for the present, deistical objections. It may be added, that the whole structure of Deism is built, upon strong improbabilities, when contrasted with the direct, positive evidence of Christianity, both internal and external. But, what merits the particular consideration of all sober men, is, the doctrine of Deists makes Moses and the prophets, Jesus Christ and his apostles, a set of impostors, impious deceivers. If what they say be true, Jesus Christ was the greatest impostor, who ever visited the world. He claimed the character of a prophet, sent from God, to reveal to men, future invisible realities: And he appealed to his works and miracles, in support of his Divine Mission. If he was a real impostor, as Deists say, he was a great one. But how an impostor, the most extraordinary of any who has appeared, should maintain such a character, as Christ maintained, is unaccountable, upon any principle ever yet discovered in human nature. Like all other impostors, Christ, had he been one, must have been governed by ambition. Instead, therefore, of opposing the sinful prejudices of the Jewish nation, he would have seized the favorable opportunity, of profiting by them. He would have flattered the vices, and applauded the seeming virtues, of that people. But the conduct of Christ was the reverse of all this. He openly reproved the first characters among the Jewish nobility, and uniformly taught them duties directly opposite to pride and vain glory. The author before quoted, says: "If any one can believe that these men could become impostors, for no other purpose than the propagation of truth, villains, for no end, but to teach honesty, and martyrs, without the least prospect of honor or advantage, &c. &c. &c. he must be possessed of much more faith than is necessary to make him a Christian, and remain an unbeliever from mere credulity."

With this consideration is connected, the usual method of Deists, in undermining revealed religion. They oppose loose, unconnected objections, to the whole weight of evidence,



dence, in support of Christianity. The proof of the christian religion consists in a long series of things, closely connected, and reaching from the beginning of time to the present day. Deists have the vanity and the audacity, to select some unconnected story, such as Samson's foxes, or Jonah's whale, as they sneeringly call them, and dress these facts, in the most ridiculous light, and then exhibit them, as full proof of the forgery of the Bible.

This mode of attacking revealed religion, is calculated to mislead and deceive those, who are unaccustomed to arrange the evidences of Christianity. It is taking the advantage of the ignorant and unskilful.

The marked and decided hatred, which Deists shew towards revealed religion, betrays a consciousness, that they view the contents of the Bible to be against them. Their uniform method is, to neglect the examination of evidence, in support of divine inspiration. Their main work consists, in collecting objections, and using them, to sink the credit of Christianity. They hide the evidence in favor of divine truth, and act with decision, without allowing themselves a previous examination of the subject. They appear to be reduced to the dreadful alternative, of destroying the Bible, in order to live upon its ruins. The manner of their treating the subject, is proof, their objections, to revealed religion, are not the result of close investigation, or the sober dictates of the understanding, but the malevolence of the heart.

Deism is inconsistent with human prudence. It advances against revealed religion, with a confidence, justified by nothing short of positive proof, that the holy Scriptures are not the inspiration of God.

It is well known, many Deists are fond of disturbing serious company with their absurdities. It must occur to every thinking mind, that the blaspheming infidel, has no security, against the event of being convicted, when too late, of all the truths of revealed religion. To rest an eternal interest upon the unsupported confidence of Deists, amounts to presumption. No man, acting rationally, would willingly hazard so much, without the most convincing evidence, that the issue of his conduct, will be favorable. Nothing, then, but real delusion, animates the zealous infidel, in attacking Christianity, with a virulence unequalled.

Infidels

Infidels cannot possibly act upon safer ground than doubt ; when, therefore, they admit their doubts, upon this subject, to occupy the place of positive proof, they reduce themselves to a level, with the wildest enthusiasts. It is true, enthusiasm, and infidelity, are wide extremes ; yet they both unite, in committing their particular subjects to the guidance of their passions ; they unite, in treating, with neglect, light and evidence, in the department of religion. Fiery ungovernable zeal stimulates the enthusiast : Zeal, charged with bitterness and rancorous disaffection to revealed religion, spurs on the infidel.

A book, called the Age of Reason, written by Thomas Paine, will next come under consideration. In this performance is found nothing new, as to objections against Christianity. He takes the ground, long occupied by infidels. In the manner of his writing, there is a kind of novelty. In rashness, inconsistency, misrepresentation, ridicule, and false reasoning, few men, perhaps, on any subject, have ever surpassed him.

Some of his inconsistencies will first be named. Mr. Paine speaks respectfully of Jesus Christ, and reprobates revealed religion, as the origin of all human misery. His words are : " The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind. He preached most excellent morality." Again he says : " The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation or revealed religion."

Is not this a contradiction ? How can most excellent morality, be charged with being the origin, of the greatest miseries ? It would have been as consistent, to have said : The sun spreads light, life and joy, through the world, and is the real source of all the miseries of man.

Apart from inconsistency, he makes this heavy charge against revealed religion, in direct opposition to the teachings of the holy Scriptures. He confounds the corruptions of men, with the pure doctrines of godliness. His charge, against Christianity, is an unfounded, disingenuous accusation.

He tells us : " The word of God cannot exist in any written or human language ;" and in the same work he allows it possible for the Almighty to make a communication immediately



immediately to men. This is saying, God can reveal truth to men ; but such a revelation cannot exist among men, which, in effect, is saying nothing. It is saying and unsaying.

The reason he assigns for the impossibility of the word of God having existence among men, is, the progressive change of words, and the want of universal language. And, for the same causes, his Age of Reason cannot exist, among men, in any written or human language.

In some parts of his book, he has exhibited Deism, as the only religion of man. And did he expect that committing his deistical sentiments to writing, would give them existence among men, in written or human language ? And cannot God have his communications to men committed to writing, in human language, as well as he, his infidelity ? Has he the advantage of the Almighty, in placing his infidelity in human or written language ? He wrote his book, with intention to put the world in possession of his deistical notions ; and he expected, they would have an extensive existence among men : And yet God cannot do so much, because, there is no universal language. What an inconsistency !

This author, in treating upon miracles, says : " We cannot judge of miracles, because we do not know the whole extent of the laws of nature." This is found in the first part of his work. In the conclusion of the second part, he tells us : " The creation is the Bible of the Deist. Deism then teaches us without the possibility of being deceived, all that is necessary or proper to be known." But if we are unacquainted with the laws of nature, in their extent, how are we secured from deception ? Creation is a plain intelligible book ; but we are ignorant of its extent ; and if ignorant of it, why are we not liable to be deceived by it ?

In sinking the credit of miracles, he tells us : " The exhibition of a miracle implies a lameness or weakness in the doctrine that is preached." And is not the book of creation subjected to the same difficulty ?

According to his doctrine, God exhibits moral truth, through the medium of creation. And do the works of God, in creation, imply less weakness, in the doctrine, it teaches, than a miracle does ?

Mr. Paine, confident that the structure of the universe contains all useful knowledge, considers God as speaking to men,

men, in his works, and saying : " Learn from my munificence to all, to be kind to each other." His doctrine is, God invites men, by the works placed before them, to imitate him. Imitate him ! in what ? In his munificence. And does the language of creation hold forth no other instance of divine conduct, for the imitation of man ? God, in some cases, communicates sparingly : And may not man imitate God in this example ? God sometimes withholds his favors : May not man imitate him, by shutting up his bowels of compassion ? God, in some cases, by means of the established laws of creation, instantaneously, takes away the life of men : And may not a man imitate God, in instances of this kind, and by them think himself justified, in giving his neighbor the fatal stab ?

This author determines, the Bible is not the word of God, because, in it, is the account of the Israelites' destroying the Canaanites, by the express command of God. This he calls assassination. And he says, this command is contrary to all our belief in the moral justice of God. He asks, Wherein could crying smiling infants offend ? He spurns the book, which contains such accounts.

He professes himself a Deist, and pretends to obtain his notions of the moral justice of God from his works. Creation is his book. Crying smiling infants are destroyed by fire, by earthquakes, by famine, and by many other calamities. The evil is the same, to the suffering infants, whether they are destroyed by the express command of God, or by any of the forementioned means. Why, then, does he not spurn, as spurious, his book of creation, in which these facts are written ?

The Canaanites were accustomed to sacrifice crying smiling infants to their hateful idol, Moloch. Their iniquity was full. It can never be proved, inconsistent with the moral justice of God, to give it, in express command, to have them extinguished.

Mr. Paine concludes, Moses was not the author of the books, ascribed to him, because, in one of them, it is said, Moses was very meek, above all the men, which were on the face of the earth. This verse gives him great offence, and on account of it, he says : " If Moses was not the author, the books are without authority ; and if he was the author, the author is without credit, because, to boast of meekness is the reverse of meekness, and is a lie in sentiment."



ment." The reader may see the whole force of this argument, in the following application of it, to Mr. Paine's own writings.

In the first part of the *Age of Reason*, it is said : " The book of Luke gained admittance among the canonical books, by one vote only." In his second part, he tells us, he never inserted this. What reason have we, to believe, Thomas Paine was the author of the *Age of Reason* ? Some part of it, he says, was not written by him. If Moses is set aside, because some hand might make the addition of this verse, to his books ; by the same rule, his book is set aside, because of similar additions. Now, if he was not the author of the *Age of Reason*, the book is without authority, and if he was the author of it, the author is without credit ; because, to boast, as he does, of not having persecuted any man, in the American, or French revolution, is the reverse of the quality boasted of, and is a lie in sentiment.

He admits the books of Ezra and Nehemiah to be genuine : But he does not admit them to be the word of God. What, genuine books, and not the word of God ! And yet, in the beginning of Ezra, we are informed, the prophesy of Jeremiah was fulfilled. And in each of those books reference is had, to the books of Moses, and other books of the Old Testament, as true, authentic records.

He admits, also, the writings of Ezekiel, and Daniel, to be genuine ; which admission destroys his whole performance, in his *Age of Reason*. For if Daniel is genuine and authentic, Christianity is established. Another inconsistency in his book, deserving notice, is, that in the first part of his work, he says, the book of Proverbs is an instructive table of ethics ; and in his second part, he calls it a jest book. How an instructive table of ethics, is a jest book, no man can tell, but he, who knows how to reconcile contradictions.

The reader will now please to take into consideration, the falsehoods, misrepresentations, and erroneous reasonings, copiously disseminated, in Mr. Paine's book. It may be, previously, observed, that reasoning is concerned with two, or more, propositions. Laying down two or three positions, and comparing them together, and deducing undeniable consequences, from them, is called reasoning. There is such a thing as drawing a just inference, from a false position : This is called sophistry, or deceitful argumentation. Whether  
this

this latter mode of reasoning is not applicable to the greater part of Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason*, the reader will judge for himself.

In his preface to his second part he pleads the rectitude of his infidelity, from his experience of the conscientious trial of his own principles. Such appeals prove nothing, in the present case. Thousands of martyrs, in firm belief of the Gospel, have experienced the conscientious trial of their faith. These witnesses will stand in proof of revealed religion. The evidence of the truth of Divine Revelation, derived from the sufferings of the martyrs, goes as far to support the truth of Christianity, as the experience of infidels can go, in support of infidelity. The conscientious trial of one's principles, is no proof of the rectitude of one's opinion. The robber, who has been accustomed to look upon property, as lawful plunder, may experience the conscientious trial of his tenets, as well as any man.

Mr. Paine asserts : " There is no affirmative evidence, that Moses is the author of the books ascribed to him, and that he is the author, is altogether an unfounded opinion, got abroad nobody knows how." He attempts to prove the Bible is not the word of God, from the books of the Bible. Yet he saith, there is no affirmative evidence, Moses is the author of the books, which bear his name. Admit affirmative evidence to be the testimony of men, and the Bible itself makes his assertion a falsehood. The nation of the Jews have affirmed, and do affirm, to this day, that Moses is the author of the books ascribed to him. This author, no doubt, would admit Jesus Christ as affirmative evidence ; for he calls him a modest man. Christ told the Jews, " Moses wrote of him. Did not Moses give you the law ?"

Another argument he uses, to prove Moses was not the author of the five books ascribed to him, is, because Moses is spoken of in the third person, and this, he says, is the style of another man, speaking of Moses. It is always, he says, " The Lord said unto Moses, or Moses said unto the Lord." This argument against the authorship of Moses, is, that Moses speaks of himself in the third person. This, he calls the language of another man, speaking of Moses.

In the works of Josephus, in the Commentaries of Caesar, and in other ancient and modern writings, the same manner of



of writing is adopted. When Josephus speaks of himself, it is, Josephus, who said or did this and that. When Cæsar speaks of himself, it is, Cæsar, who made a speech, it is, Cæsar, who invaded Britain, &c. But no man questions the genuineness of these books. What weight, then, is there in his argument against the authorship of Moses; when the same manner of writing, in other authors, is not the smallest objection against them? Give Moses the grammatical right, which other men claim, and his objection, to the authorship of Moses, is childish nonsense. In a late publication, under the signature of the French Minister, the third person is used, throughout the communication. Shall not posterity, on our author's argument, conclude, that the undersigned of this communication, was not the author of it?

Mr. Paine exerts himself, to make people believe, Moses was not the author of Genesis, because the word Dan is found in Genesis; and in the book of Judges, it appears Dan had not a name, till 331 years after the death of Moses. This is a curious argument, calculated to mislead and deceive the ignorant. The fallacy of this reasoning rests upon his taking for granted, that the Dan in Genesis, and the Dan in Judges, is the same place. *Abram pursued them unto Dan.* And what hindered his pursuing them further? A city, or a river? A river will stop an army as well as a city. And here it is proper to observe, Jordan was formed by the junction of two rivers, called Jor and Dan. And the probability is, the Dan, mentioned in Genesis, is the river Dan; and not the city once called Laish. Admit this to be the truth, and Mr. Paine's long illustration sinks to nothing: His argument spends its whole force, without reaching the point. Moses, as an author, remains unhurt.

It is suggested to the curious, as a problem, whether the geographical description of the holy land, admits the Dan, in Genesis, and the Dan, in Judges, to be the same city. From the situation of places, in that country, there exists not a doubt, the Dan mentioned, in Genesis, will be placed to the eastward of Sodom; and the Dan, mentioned in Judges, was certainly to the westward of Jerusalem, which was west of Sodom.

Truth ventures into the light. Truth is not afraid of the result of close investigation. Mr. Paine speaks in commendation

ation of science, and his modesty frequently allows him to speak of it, as if he possessed no small share of it himself. Priests he represents, as an ignorant set of men, the sum of whose knowledge, is *a, b, ab,* and *hic, hæc, hoc.* If his account of them be true, they will be incompetent to the solution of the proposed problem. Let it, then, be submitted to some learned man, not attached to the priesthood. But his conclusion, against the authorship of Moses, is not admitted, even upon the supposition, the Dan, in the before-mentioned books, meant the same place. For some transcriber might give it the name, in Genesis, though it was not known by that name before.

To imbitter the minds of people, Mr. Paine places Moses among the most detestable villains, and paints his conduct in all the odious colors, which disgrace humanity. He charges him with issuing orders, to butcher boys, to massacre the mothers, and debauch the daughters; and to complete the horrid scene of his representation he says: "The number of women children consigned to debauchery by order of Moses, was thirty two thousand." In his account of the conduct of Moses, this man has intermingled falsehood with misrepresentation. Falsehood, in asserting Moses assassinated boys, women and children, by his own authority alone. This assertion is the thing to be proved. Had he proved, that Moses carried on his wars against the Canaanites, without any command from God, he would have proved Moses a villain: But this proof cannot be made, till the proof is made out, that Moses was not commissioned of God, to extirpate that people.—Falsehood, in saying that women children were consigned to debauchery, by the order of Moses. There is no proof of this, in the Bible, or in any other book. Slavery, and not debauchery, was the lot of captives, in ancient times. It was then the custom of the Israelites, and other nations, to make slaves of their captives. All he says, about the cruelty of Moses, is built upon these instances of falsehood and misrepresentation; consequently, his charge against Moses is abuse and slander.

He places the iron bedstead of the king of Bashan among his proofs, that Deuteronomy is a fabulous book, not written by Moses, nor till four hundred years after his death. He has calculated the length of the king's bed, to great exactness; and on account



account of its length, he considers the book of Deuteronomy a fable. But, to have proved his assertion, he should have accompanied it with the proof, that the bed was really too long for the monarch ; and that a royal bed was, in no instance, of a larger size than a common one ; and that Og did not command his men, as Alexander did, to enlarge their bedsteads, in order to give people, in after time, an idea of the extraordinary stature of his countrymen.

The bedstead of Og was said to be in Rabbath of Ammon ; which Rabbath, Mr. Paine says, was not taken, till four hundred years after Moses' time.—And this Rabbath did not belong to the dominions of Bashan, and Moses could know nothing about Rabbath, nor of what was in it. In order to support his fable, he must have proved the fact, that Rabbath was not a city of Bashan ; and that it was impossible, that the king's bed could be in that city, after the king was slain ; and that it was impossible for Moses to have evidence of a fact existing, in a city, which he had never seen.

For, if there is not the least evidence to prove, Rabbath did not belong to Bashan ; that the bed of the king might not remain, when the king was dead ; and that Moses was unable to substantiate a fact, without being an eye witness of it ; the testimony of Moses must be admitted, and Thomas Paine's account of the matter be called, something worse than fable, unfounded assertion, unsupported representation. His telling us, what he knows nothing about, divests him of all title to credit.

In destroying the authority of the book of Joshua, he uses the expression, "*unto this day*," as proof, that the book was written long after Joshua's time. Several other similar expressions, he considers, as proof, the facts were recorded, a long time after the authors are said to have lived. His argument against the book of Joshua is founded upon the lapse of centuries, implied, in the expression, *unto this day*. He contends for length of time, in order to make the proof the book was written, long after Joshua's death. But he has no authority from the use of the term, in question, to make it an argument of the smallest weight. Moses, in his last years, used a like expression to mark an event, which happened within the memory of them, who were then living : "The Lord hath destroyed them, *unto this day*." According to the account given in the Bible, Joshua lived twenty four years,

years, after the desolation of Ai : And it was consistent for him, in the latter part of his life, to say, Ai is in ruin unto this day. His argument against the book of Joshua, is but a mere quibble.

Mr. Paine makes himself merry, with the tale of the sun standing still upon Gibeon, and the moon in Ajalon. "This," he says, is a fable which detects itself. Such a circumstance could not have happened, without being known all over the whole world. One half would have wondered, why the sun did not rise, and the other why it did not set, and the tradition of it, would have been universal." According to his story, this fable detects itself, because no people, in the world, know any thing about it. But there is sufficient reason, why they should be ignorant of it ; for no nation has any records, which reach this period, by several hundred years. But the nation, whose history carries us the furthest back, gives some intimations of the event. The Egyptians, whose records approach the nearest to this time, have a confused account, that the sun had four times deviated from his course. Mr. Paine asserts, the book of Joshua is anonymous, and consequently without authority. This is a false conclusion, even admitting the book of Joshua is anonymous. It is a conclusion, calculated to deceive the ignorant. Anonymous records are often admitted as authentic. A nameless book may contain truth, or falsehood. Thomas Paine's Age of Reason would have contained just as much truth, and just as much falsehood in it, had it been anonymous.

This author professes to be a great enemy to cruelty ; but he injures the character of Ruth. He calls her a strolling country girl of infamous character. This charge against Ruth is false. She was not a country girl. She had been married for ten years. She became a widow, and implored protection from an aged kinsman.

Mr. Paine wishes to make people believe, the books of Kings are books of lies, because several things are mentioned in them, which are not mentioned in Chronicles. The ascent of Elijah, the children, who mocked Elisha, the resurrection of a dead man, are recorded in Kings, but not in Chronicles ; and because they are not found in Chronicles, he concludes, the books of Kings are books of lies.

Consider,



Consider, then, the force of this argument; and will it not be evident, that any one would be ridiculed, who should reason, in the same manner, on any other subject? The books of Chronicles have ever been reckoned, a supplement, or abridgment, of Kings: And who can expect, in such kind of records, to find all the same facts related over again? It is granted, the books of Kings and Chronicles were histories of the same time. What then? Is the silence of one author, concerning certain facts, absolute proof of lies, in another author, who records them? In General Washington's official letters, so called, are related facts, which no historian has recorded. What then? What! we must consider all things mentioned in Washington's letters to be lies. According to this author's reasoning, we must make the conclusion, that certain facts, in the General's letters, are false; because every historian, who has written a history of the time, when they are said to have happened, is silent about them. Will every American submit to this mode of reasoning? No better argument than this, is employed against the books of Kings.

To sink the prophets into contempt, this author lets us know, by an exact statement, that all the prophets, except three, lived during the period, included in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and that but two of them are mentioned in these books. The whole force of this argument rests upon the silence of the books of Kings and Chronicles, concerning the names of the prophets. He says: "The Bible historians have treated these men, with degrading silence." The conclusion he draws, from this circumstance, is, "that the prophets were not men of such importance as priests and commentators have since represented them to be." And must every man be ranked among liars and rascals, whose name happens not to be mentioned by the historian of his time? Mr. Paine informs us, in his book, that he resided, in America, during the late revolution; and, at a certain time, wrote a book, called Common Sense; an anonymous work, and, consequently, without authority, according to his doctrine. But whoever reads Ramsay's, or Gordon's history, will find Mr. Paine's name but sparingly mentioned, in these authors. And yet their histories include the time, of his residing in America. The conclusion, then, from the  
silence

silence of these men, is, that Mr. Paine is not a man of much importance. His argument against the prophets, will sink *him*, to the same insignificant rank, which he assigns to them.

In a note, this author has a witticism, upon the story of an angel's appearing to Joshua, with a drawn sword in his hand. Had he known the design of this appearance, he would have seen, that his wit was misplaced. His ridicule, about pulling off the shoe, must have originated from ignorance of ancient customs. Pulling off the shoe was a token of reverence for the Divine Presence; and the custom of going barefoot, into religious buildings, continues in some countries, to the present time.

This author destroys the authority of Ezra and Nehemiah, on account of an error, in the enrolment they make of the numbers returned from Babylon; and to make it easy for the weakest man to become an infidel, he places the several numbers, in full view, and adds them together; and, by an exact calculation, makes it appear, the sum total does not agree with the particulars. Can it be supposed, that Ezra was so ignorant of the lowest branch of science, as not to be able to add together sixty particulars? What if there was a mistake in numbers? The Jews reckoned by letters, and it was easy to mistake one letter for another. Mistake about numbers cannot be certain evidence of falsehood. This author says, he spoke respectfully of the book of Job in the former part of his work, and did it ignorantly. If his mistake, in this instance, be allowed the weight, he gives it against the books in question, it will destroy his whole performance.

This author asserts, with respect to the character represented in Job, under the name Satan, that this is the first and only time, this name is mentioned in the Bible. This assertion is false. Satan, meaning an enemy, is found, in many places, in the Bible, both before, and after the book of Job. "And Satan stood up against Israel." Chron. xxi. 1. "And let Satan stand at his right hand." Ps. cix. 6.

This author boldly tells us, the Jews never prayed, but when they were in trouble; and never prayed for anything, but victory, vengeance and riches. This is a falsehood, and is made from ignorance, or from design; if from design, it appears he meant to make lying and falsehood supply the  
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place of argument. Bishop Watson, in answer to this assertion, says: "Read Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and blush for your assertion,—illiberal and uncharitable in the extreme."

Mr. Paine adds another falsehood, in saying, the heathen did not worship images more than we do. This man has undertaken to prove the Bible false, from the Bible itself; and he has promised not to go out of the Bible for proof of its forgery. He tells us: "The heathen did not worship images." Astonishing! One is divided, whether to consider the effrontery, or the ignorance of the man, to be the greatest. What! did not the heathen worship images? What! did not Nebuchadnezzar command the princes, the governors, and captains, and rulers of the provinces, to worship the image of gold? The town clerk of Ephesus testifies against this author's assertions. "What man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?" The worship of images, among the heathen, was universal.

Mr. Paine calls the book of Psalms a song book. Let any sober man read the Psalms, and judge, whether there is any thing, in them, bearing the least resemblance to the purest songs of human composition. In piety, in purity of morals, and in elevated diction, as well as rational divinity, the Psalms far surpass the most celebrated songs of the most distinguished poets.

The book of Proverbs gets the name of a jest book in this man's work; and the books of Ecclesiastes and Solomon's Song, he makes a subject of ridicule. This, doubtless, was the easiest way he had to pass them, in his advance through the Bible. The reader will judge, whether there is any jesting in the first Proverb, in the book of Proverbs, or any thing deserving ridicule in the last verse of Ecclesiastes. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction." "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: For this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." A man, who can make himself witty, upon words of this import, can convert solemnity into mirth.

Mr.

Mr. Paine has abused the prophet Isaiah, and given a misrepresentation to some of the most important parts of his prophecy. He calls Isaiah a lying prophet, and an impostor, and the book, that bears his name, a book of falsehoods. He tells us, the prophecy of Isaiah, which respects Cyrus, was written one hundred and fifty years after the death of Isaiah: "That the forty fourth and the beginning of the forty fifth chapters of Isaiah, are a compliment to Cyrus; who permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity." Here mark the invention of the man. To destroy the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning Cyrus, he considers this very prophecy a history, written after the event. But falsehood is not always consistent. It was a singular compliment he makes the captive Jew pay Cyrus, by telling him, his religion was, but superstition. The Persian prince, doubtless, adhered to the religion of his country, which supposed two opposite principles, under the emblem of light and darkness. This author makes the captive Jew speak, in the name of God, saying, I form the light, and create darkness,—I the Lord do all these things. I am the Lord and there is none else.

Mr. Paine was not sufficiently attentive to his representation of the burden of Babylon, to place the writers of the prophecy, at a proper distance, so as to meet the events. Babylon was destroyed, according to the prediction of Isaiah, but it was not destroyed in Cyrus's time, nor till long after his death. This city was in a state of prosperity when Alexander marched his army into the east; nor was it swept with the besom of destruction for a long time after this period.

This author calls Isaiah a lying prophet, for delivering the following prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." This same prophecy proved, Isaiah was not an impostor, but a true prophet.

He goes on to tell us; Isaiah proved a false prophet in his message to Ahaz. The king of Syria, and the king of Israel, at a certain time, were combined against Ahaz, and this author says, Isaiah told Ahaz, these two kings should not succeed against him; but instead of the event's answering to his prediction, they succeeded. "Ahaz, he says, was defeated and destroyed, an hundred and twenty thousand of his



his people were slaughtered, Jerusalem was plundered, and two hundred thousand women, and sons and daughters, carried into captivity." This is a misrepresentation of facts. Isaiah's message to Ahaz is contained, in the seventh chapter of his prophecy, and it is simply this : " The counsel of the two kings shall not stand." And what was this counsel ? It was to dethrone Ahaz, and place the son of Tabeal on his throne. This counsel did not stand. Ahaz *was not* destroyed, and the two hundred thousand women, &c. *were not* carried into captivity. The two kings *did fail* in their attempt to destroy the house of David. They *did not* destroy it. Events took place according to Isaiah's prophecy. He proved a true prophet.

In audacity, in boldly asserting absolute falsehoods, in misrepresenting facts, in profaneness of reasoning, and in villainous treatment of characters, Mr. Paine, perhaps, was never outdone by human kind. After having misrepresented the character of Jeremiah, he boldly charges him, with lying and false prediction. He misrepresents his character, in calling him a traitor to his country, for prophesying against the wishes of the princes of Judah. Jeremiah was imprisoned for delivering this prophecy, and there is the testimony of one of the king's attendants, which is proof of his being abused by the princes. Ebedmelech said unto the king ; " My Lord, the king, these men have done evil, in all that they have done to Jeremiah, the prophet." This is no inconsiderable proof of the honesty and integrity of Jeremiah.

The charge of lying is made, against this prophet, on account of his evading the questions of the princes, in conference with them. He, on this occasion, told them part of the truth, and kept back that part, which they had no right to know. It can never be proved, there was any violation of obligation in this instance. It is not lying, or duplicity, to withhold truth, from men, not entitled to the truth in question. He charges Jeremiah with false prediction, on account of his predicting the fate of Zedekiah. This prediction is found in Jeremiah, xxxiv. 2, 3, 4, 5. " Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire : And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken and delivered into his hand : And thine eyes shall behold

hold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee, mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. Thou shalt not die by the sword :—Thou shalt die in peace."

This is the prediction, he calls false : But every part of it was exactly fulfilled. The city *was* taken, and delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he burnt it. Zedekiah did *not* escape ; but was taken. Zedekiah saw the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon gave judgment against him, and put out his eyes. Zedekiah *was* carried to Babylon. Zedekiah *did not* die by the sword. He died in peace. Jeremiah's prediction, in this instance, was true. The history records the facts to have taken place, as the prophet had foretold. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Jer. li. This author's charge, against the prophet, is false. His whole statement of the account is a misrepresentation.

When this author comes, to treat upon the New Testament, he tells us, the christian faith is built, upon the heathen mythology. This is a mere groundless assertion : It is only a conjecture, contrived to support a favorite tenet, the forgery of the Bible. In undermining the New Testament, he lays down two incontrovertible positions, as he calls them. The first is, " That the agreement of all the parts of a story, does not prove that story to be true." The second is, " That the disagreement of the parts of a story proves the whole cannot be true." These connected positions, are to be his mighty engine, to beat down the whole fabric of Christianity. Here let the reader mark his fallacious reasoning, upon this subject, and the absurd conclusion he means to make from his premises. Every thinking man knows, these positions will not bear to be applied to credible testimony. Suppose, four men of good character agree in testimony, concerning a fact ; who will refuse to admit their testimony ? Three, or five, credible witnesses, being spectators to a certain transaction, are not able, usually, to relate it, in the same order, or to mention all the circumstances of it. They may all agree, as to the principal fact ; but, some of them omit one circumstance, belonging to it, and some of them omit another. As to circumstances, they disagree ; in the principal fact, they unite. Does their disagreement, in circumstantial things, weaken their testimony, in favor of the fact itself ? Certainly it does not. This author tells us, Matthew



Matthew and Luke disagree, in giving the genealogy of Christ. Matthew's genealogy is in the first chapter of Matthew ; and Luke's, in the third chapter of Luke. He says: " Did these two men agree, it would not prove their genealogy to be true, but as they contradict each other, in every particular, it proves falsehood absolutely. If Matthew speaks truth, Luke speaks falsehood ; and if Luke speaks truth, Matthew speaks falsehood." But what if Matthew speaks truth, and Luke speaks truth, though it be not the same truth ? What then ? Are their accounts forgeries ? The conclusion does not follow. They are said to contradict each other in every particular. How ? In giving the same genealogy ? No : Matthew gives one, and Luke another. Matthew records the genealogy of Joseph, and Luke records the genealogy of Mary. And the presumption is, they both took their respective genealogies from authentic records. For, had they imposed a false account upon the Jewish nation, they would have been immediately detected.

To give the reader full proof, the genealogies of Matthew and Luke are mere forgeries, this author makes the following arithmetical calculation : " From the birth of David, to the birth of Christ, is upwards of one thousand and eighty years ; and as there were but twenty seven full generations, to find the average age of each person, mentioned in the list, at the time his first son was born, it is only necessary to divide one thousand and eighty by twenty seven, which gives forty years for each person. As the life time of man was then but of the same extent, it is now, it is an absurdity to suppose that twenty seven following generations should all be old batchelors before they married. So far from this genealogy being a solemn truth, it is not a reasonable lie." Here is the appearance of mathematical accuracy. Shall the argument and the conclusion be admitted ? They both stand or fall together.

It will be remembered, that Ezra and Nehemiah were set aside, by this author, because they were charged with a mistake in calculation. If the doctrine of erroneous calculation had weight against their books, let it have its application to this man's Age of Reason. In his argumentation, two mistakes are visible, each of which alone destroys the whole force of his reasoning, against the genealogies of Matthew  
and

and Luke. The one is, that in Matthew's genealogy three generations are omitted ; Azariah, Joash and Azariah. Let these be added to the twenty seven, and they make thirty, and then the average age, at the time of the first born son, will be thirty seven. The other error is, he has ignorantly or designedly, taken it for granted, the first born son always succeeded his father. This was not true. Solomon succeeded David on the throne of Israel ; but Solomon was not the first born son of David. He certainly had several brethren, who were grown to manhood, before he was born. Abijah succeeded Rehoboam ; but Rehoboam had three sons, before Abijah was born. The calculation and conclusion he makes is demonstrably false : False, on account of omissions ; false, because the first born are assumed for succession ; false upon his own principles. Is this the man who detects the forgery and falsehood of the Bible ? Necessitated to make suppositions, contrary to facts, in order to fix the authority of the Bible. If ignorance lead him to such gross errors, he is certainly unfit to teach men, upon the subject of religion ; if design, he is less deserving of credit. If either of them, he is to be suspected in all his assertions.

This author tells us : " The New Testament being founded upon the prophecies of the Old, must follow the fate of its foundation." He has the confidence to suppose, he has removed the prophecies ; and, hence, fondly concludes, he has destroyed the New Testament. But his conclusion does not follow. Admit the prophecies were destroyed : (Though, it is not in his power to destroy them.) Admit the prophecies were proved forgeries ; this proof would not destroy the authority of the New Testament. The New Testament is connected with the prophecies of the Old ; but the New Testament is not wholly founded upon the prophecies of the Old. Independent of prophecy, the New Testament is accompanied with evidence of its truth. Miracles, and its internal character, are convincing proofs to a Gentile, totally unacquainted with the prophecies.

He allows the probability of the existence of such a person as Jesus Christ ; but considers his existence, or non-existence, a matter of total indifference. " It is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told, in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which he contends."

What !



What ! Is the real existence of a man, working miracles, and preaching in the cities of Judea, a fable ? This way of reckoning will convert every fact into a fable.

He says : " The miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, is a fable, blasphemously obscene." How obscenity can be predicated, of the operations of an infinite incorporeal Spirit, is beyond the power of man to tell. He might, as well, have applied obscenity to God's creative power. " For he spake, and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." Men, who have imbibed the poison of this author, have been emboldened by him, to utter blasphemous expressions, concerning the conception of Christ. It deserves to be considered, what right men have, to affix such ideas to the agency of the Divine Spirit.

Mr. Paine, when treating upon the books of the New Testament, says : " There is no direct proof for, or against their genuineness. The state of the case is doubtfulness, and doubtfulness is the opposite of belief." Doubtfulness is not the opposite of belief : Doubt always supposes some belief, some evidence ; otherwise, all doubt would be removed. His placing the genuineness of the New Testament, in a state of doubtfulness, is admitting some proof, in favor of those books.

He furnishes us with an instance of contradiction, between Matthew and Luke, in the angel announcing the immaculate conception. Matthew, he says, relates : " The angel appeared to Joseph ; and Luke saith, it was to Mary." This is no contradiction. For the angel appeared, both to Joseph and Mary. To Mary first, and to Joseph, some months afterward. In this case, Matthew speaks truth, and Luke speaks truth ; but they speak of different appearances.

He considers the story of Herod's destroying all the children, under two years old, to be a lie ; because it is mentioned by Matthew only. The silence of one, or more writers, does not prove the falsehood of another. There might be reasons, why Matthew should record this fact, and the other evangelists omit it. Matthew wrote to Jews ; and they were Jewish children, whom Herod killed. The fact was well known to that nation ; and Matthew's recording it is rather proof of its truth. For if Herod had never massacred those children, every Jew would have objected to the account of it,

it, as given in Matthew's Gospel. This man has told us : " Matthew makes Jesus escape the slaughter, by being conveyed to Egypt ; but John was under two years old, and he stayed behind, and yet John fared as well as Jesus, who escaped." This makes out the lie. It is enough to destroy one's patience to follow this man's fallacious mode of argumentation. He cannot prove John was under two years of age, at the time, Herod ordered the massacre of the children. John was six months older than Jesus ; and might be beyond the age of two years ; but if he was not, his escaping with his life is no proof, Herod did not destroy all the children he could find, of the age, included in his edict. John might not be within Herod's jurisdiction at the time, the children were slain.

Mr. Paine tells us, in his preface to his second part, that when Robespierre decreed the death of certain characters, the name of Thomas Paine was on the list ; but Thomas Paine escaped the massacre of Robespierre. Shall the future historian conclude, the massacre of Robespierre was a lie, because Thomas Paine was not guillotined ?

This author says : " That not any two of the evangelists agree, in reciting, in exactly the same words, the written inscription, placed upon the cross."

Matthew states the inscription, *This is Jesus the King of the Jews*. Mark reads it, *The king of the Jews*. Luke, *This is the king of the Jews*. John, *Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews*. Here, it is observed, all the evangelists agree in the main and essential parts of the inscription. The king of the Jews is found in each one of them. As the inscription was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, it cannot be proved, it was written, in each language, in exactly the same words.

This author says : " The only one of the apostles who was present, at the crucifixion, was Peter ; and Peter's testimony is nothing, because he was convicted of perjury." This statement is not true. It is not certain Peter was present, at the crucifixion. John was certainly present, on the spot ; because Jesus, while on the cross, committed to John the care of his aged mother. The reason, why Peter's testimony is admitted, is, because he repented of his denial of Christ, and suffered martyrdom, on account of his faith.



Mr. Paine, exerts himself, to destroy the evangelists, because the circumstances attending the crucifixion, are differently related, in the four books. He saith, Matthew tells us, There was darkness over all the land, from the sixth hour unto the ninth. That the veil of the temple was rent in twain. That there was an earthquake. That the rocks rent. That the graves were opened, and the bodies of many of the saints, that slept, arose. The other evangelists, he says, do not mention these facts: From hence he concludes, Matthew's account is a lie. This, in part, is a misrepresentation. Mark and Luke *do* record two of the miracles, mentioned by Matthew, the darkness, and the rending of the veil; and their silence, respecting the others, is no proof, they were ignorant of them, or believed them not. Neither is their silence disagreement with Matthew. The silence of John, upon the miracles attending the crucifixion, is easily accounted for, on the principle of his Gospel being a supplement to the other Gospels. He records few of the miracles recorded by the other evangelists, and relates many things not related by them.

This author amuses himself with Matthew's account of the resurrection of the saints; and appears to be displeased with him for not being more particular upon the subject. But, who can admit the supposition, that Matthew gave a false account of the resurrection of the saints? The admission of its falsehood, would have effectually destroyed the credit of his history. This fact was well known, in case it was true; and upon the supposition it was not true, every Jew would have been able, to have contradicted him. Why then was not his testimony proved false, in its first appearance? The Jews were inimical to the Gospel, at that time, and have continued so, to the present day. They would have gladly availed themselves of any falsehood, in matter of fact.

This author makes the writers of the New Testament disagree, in their account of Christ's resurrection; and their disagreement, he says, "is proof, they were not present, and consequently knew nothing of it." "Matthew, he says, states, that at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Mark says it was sunrising. John saith it was dark. Luke says, it was Mary Magdalene and  
Joanna

Joanna and Mary the mother of James, and other women, that came to the sepulchre. And John states, that Mary Magdalene came alone." Where is the disagreement of the writers? They all agree, as to the day the women went to the sepulchre. They all agree, as to the time of day, the women went to the sepulchre. It was early in the morning. Neither is there any disagreement of the writers, respecting the women, who went to the sepulchre. John states that Mary Magdalene went, but he does not say, she went alone; she might be accompanied with the other women, whom Luke mentions. Mr. Paine calls Mary Magdalene a common woman. This is said, without proof, and his assertion is nothing less, than designed slander, for the purpose of making the story appear ridiculous. It is indecent, and a reproach.

This author asserts, the evangelists contradict one another, in their account of Christ's appearing to the eleven, after his resurrection. He states, that Matthew relates the angels' appearing to the two Maries, saying, Behold, Christ is gone before you into Galilee. But John, he saith, tells a different story: "Then the same day, at evening being the first day of the week, (the day of Christ's resurrection) when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst of them." "Luke, he says, contradicts Matthew more pointedly than John does; for he says expressly that the meeting was in Jerusalem, the evening of the same day, that Christ rose, and that the eleven were there." And to make the contradiction more visible, this man places Luke and John among the eleven, at Galilee, on the day, Christ rose from the dead. He makes Matthew say, the eleven were in Galilee, on this evening; and, if so, he says, Luke and John were among them. And he makes Luke and John, in their Gospels, say, this meeting was in Jerusalem, on the evening of the same day. If all this be true, there is a contradiction between the evangelists; but all this is not true. The reader is desired to observe the readiness of this man, in placing a falsehood, in the chain of his argument, when truth is wanted to fill the vacancy. His first assertion is false, that Matthew said, Christ was gone into Galilee. Matthew does not say Christ was gone into Galilee: He saith, Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee.



Galilee. This is not saying, he was gone ; but intimates his design of going in future. According to Matthew, Christ was not gone into Galilee ; for, in the next verse, it is said, Jesus met them. Matthew, then, says, Jesus was in Jerusalem, on this evening : Luke and John say, Jesus was in Jerusalem, this evening. The evangelists do not contradict one another, concerning this meeting.

In the next place, this author makes Luke one of the eleven, gone into Galilee ; while the writer of Luke says, the eleven were assembled in Jerusalem, at the very same time. But Luke was not one of the eleven : He tells us, in the introduction of his Gospel, that he wrote his Gospel from the testimony of eye witnesses, and ministers of the word. Is this to be called a mistake, or design ? Wilful falsehood, or ignorance ? Ignorance, no doubt. This man often makes smaller errors, than this, destroy the credit of a book, in the sacred volume. This error of ranking Luke with the eleven, according to his way of reasoning, is sufficient to destroy the credit of his whole performance. No reason can be given why an error of this magnitude, should not operate, as forcibly, against Deism, as he makes smaller ones operate, against Christianity.

He destroys Paul's account of Christ's being seen by more than five hundred brethren, at once, by saying, it is Paul only who says it ; it is the testimony of one man, and that, too, of a man, who did not believe a word of the matter himself, at the time it is said to have happened." But how groundless his assertions ? How false his reasoning ? Did Paul, before his conversion, ever say, Christ did not die and rise from the dead ? He knew Christ died, and was said to have risen from the dead : But he did not believe in him, as the promised Messiah. Paul asserts, in his epistle to the Corinthians, that Christ died, was buried, and raised from the dead, and, after his resurrection, was seen of above five hundred brethren, more than half of whom were then living. With this declaration, connect the multitude of Jews, then living in Corinth, and their readiness to avail themselves of any circumstance to have proved Paul a liar. Paul, in this case, submits the appeal to numerous living witnesses ; he puts himself in the power of his enemies. Paul's testimony, concerning the resurrection, is important.

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This author, with his usual boldness, asserts, that, "Matthew and John say not a syllable about Christ's ascension." This is false; John does say something about the ascension of Christ. "I ascend unto my Father, and you to your Father." John xx. 17.

A singular instance of design, in Mr. Paine, is his saying, "That, the whole space of time, from the crucifixion to the ascension, is but a few days, apparently not more than three or four, and that all the circumstances are reported to have happened, nearly about the same spot, Jerusalem." From this assertion, he draws the conclusion, "That it is impossible to find, in any story upon record, so many, and such glaring absurdities and contradictions and falsehoods, as are in those books." The shorter the time, and the more upon one spot a fact is exhibited, the easier it is, to relate it, with exactness. This author confines the time, between the crucifixion and the ascension, to four days, and the spot, on which the circumstances happened, to Jerusalem: The design of this contrivance was, to impress the reader with the contradictions and absurdities contained in the evangelists. Is this the man of science, who often sends his readers to the stars and far distant worlds, to learn moral truth? Is this author so engaged to make Bible falsehood appear, as often to assert falsehoods, to make us believe him? Or is he so ignorant, as not to know the contents of the New Testament? Reader, judge for thyself; judge, who adheres to truth, Thomas Paine, or the artless writers of the New Testament. As to the time, between the crucifixion and the ascension, John informs us, that Jesus appeared to his disciples on the evening of the day of his resurrection; and then, eight days after, he met with them again. Nor is this all. After these two appearances, Jesus showed himself to his disciples, at the sea of Tiberias, which is, at least, sixty miles from Jerusalem. Luke, in the book of Acts, referring to his Gospel, says: "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them *forty days*." These four days are forty days, and the spot, Jerusalem, is sixty miles distant from it.

This man has confirmed his infidelity with an oath. "So help me God." He swears the christian religion is not true. This oath is but the confirmation of an opinion, and the opinion



opinion may be false, notwithstanding his oath. In opposition to his oath, in confirmation of an opinion, is placed St. Paul's oath in confirmation of his miraculous conversion. "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Admit this oath in confirmation of a fact, and Christianity is established, and Deism is overthrown.

A bold assertion, in this author, is, "that no such book existed, as the New Testament, till more than four hundred years after Christ." Whether this assertion originated from ignorance, or from artful design, is not certain. Be it, which it may, it is a falsehood; for every one of the evangelists, and many of St. Paul's epistles, have been quoted, from about the apostolic age, to the present time.

The historical proof, the New Testament was written about the time, it is said to be written, is, the quotations made from the evangelists, by Ignatius and Polycarp, men who conversed with the apostles.\* This kind of evidence, for the New Testament being written, at the time, it is said to be written, is still stronger, from the quotations of professed infidels, who lived within the four first centuries, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. Celsus lived in the second century, Porphyry in the third, and Julian in the fourth. Each of these men attacked Christianity, and, in their attack, they speak of the four evangelists, and quote some of their contents; but they could not quote what was not written.

This author does not deny, but the epistles, which bear St. Paul's name, were written by him. He adds, it is a matter of no importance, who wrote them, since the writer attempts to prove his doctrine by argument. This is false. Paul himself tells us the contrary: "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, is not after men. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 11, 12.

He says, moreover, "Paul does not pretend to have been a witness to any of the scenes told of the resurrection and the ascension." It is true, Paul was not a spectator, and eye witness, of the resurrection and ascension of Christ; but he makes pretensions to be a witness of the resurrection: "Last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." 1 Cor. xv. 18.

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\* Ignatius became Bishop of Antioch, about thirty seven years after the ascension of Christ.

He censures St. Paul for saying one star differeth from another star in glory. He says, Paul ought to have said, "The stars differ in distance." Great Philosopher! Man of science! Tell us, the stars are at different distances! This is assuming for a truth, what neither he, nor any other man, is able to prove.

The foregoing remarks are submitted to the candid reader: They are made upon the principal arguments, which Mr. Paine uses, to prove the Bible fabulous. Few books have appeared, in the English language, more replete with falsehood, and ignorance; more destitute of truth, than his Age of Reason.

Should the reader ever examine his work, he will find many errors, misrepresentations, and sophistical arguments, which have not been noticed in these remarks. Enough, however, of his fallacious reasoning, has been detected, to create a suspicion, truth is not on his side.

His general method is first to misrepresent a fact, or assume a truth, and then cry out against the creature of his own formation. He is like a madman, who boldly charges the innocent citizen, with barbarity, and murder, and hints at unheard of crimes, and then cries, O, dreadful! O, horrible! A liar, a cut throat, a rascal, a villain, every thing detestable, and awfully wicked!

Like all other infidels, who have gone before him, his manner of attacking Christianity is no inconsiderable proof of the weakness, and wickedness of his cause. Infidels have always neglected paying attention to the evidence of revealed religion; they never confront them with manly reasoning and fair argument; but descend to a mode of attack, which, on every other subject, would render a man ridiculous and contemptible. And were Mr. Paine to adopt the same method of treating any other subject, he would be judged insane.

Ignorant and corrupted, must that man be, who can make himself believe, that Thomas Paine has spoken truth in his Age of Reason. None, but men of depraved morals, and a bad heart, can read his book, without indignation. A bold, profane and daring spirit, runs through his whole book. He speaks of sacred things, with indecency. He makes ridicule supply the place of solid argument. He is engaged, with  
uncommon



uncommon zeal, to load men, highly esteemed, with abusive epithets. He calls Moses a chief assassin ; Joshua, Samuel and David, monsters and impostors ; the Jewish kings a parcel of rascals ; the prophets liars, and St. Paul a fool.

Whoever receives the sentiments contained in his book, must receive, with them, a sourness of spirit, which will embitter him, against all who remain friendly to true religion.

Dr. Priestly says : " The cause of infidelity lies in the temper of the heart. Men seldom reject Christianity, in theory, till they have long disregarded it in practice." Men, living in the habit of irreligion, are, every day, growing in readiness, to embrace infidelity. With a practical disregard to the duties of piety, is connected religious ignorance. A man takes no pains to gain an acquaintance with the subject, his heart does not love ; it hence becomes easy, for wicked men, to take shelter under covert of Deism.

Many men, inconsiderately, take for granted, that things are questionable, because they hear them often disputed. This is far from being a just conclusion ; for even matters of fact, are often controverted. Men are in great danger of becoming Deists too soon. It is rashness, in the extreme, to act decidedly against Divine Revelation, before a man has paid proper attention to the subject. It were most devoutly to be wished, that all persons would examine the evidence of the Christian religion, before they make the conclusion, the Bible is but mere fable.

Persons, whose faith, in revealed religion, has been shaken by deistical influence, should carefully examine this weighty subject. Christianity will bear the strictest scrutiny. Christians, it is incumbent on you, to furnish your minds with the arguments, in favor of our holy religion ; you should hold yourselves in readiness, to meet the infidel on his own ground, or on any fair ground whatever. Will you tamely allow your profession to be insulted ? Will you quietly suffer Deists to divulge their absurdities, in your hearing, and before your families, and make them no reply ? In such a case, silence is a crime. Revealed religion is defensible ; infidelity is not tenable. Both Christians, and persons doubting of the divine authority of the holy Scriptures, will please to consider, that infidels take away all revealed religion, and substitute nothing in its room. They take away all the guide of  
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our faith, and weaken, inexpressibly, all the influential considerations drawn from the future world. They remove the only foundation of comfortable hope. They loosen every moral obligation. They set piety and morality afloat. They place nothing adequate to our wants in the room of revealed religion. Nothing can govern, on their principles, but the lawless passions of man. Their system makes no room for saving faith, or its fruits. They laugh at the observance of the christian Sabbath, and think it might as well, be observed once in forty days, as once in seven. They think no better of the institution of marriage. They suppose, a man may, as well, have five wives as one, and as consistently put away his wife, in a month, as keep her through life. The solemnity of an oath, with them, must be a mere formality; an oath, long a principal means of investigating truth, with them, must be as unmeaning, as the usual profanity of the vile swearer.

It is true, Mr. Paine pretends to exhibit creation as some powerful instructor; but, in so doing, he only exhibits the greater part of the human race: For it is astronomy chiefly, which is his instructor, a science which, not one, perhaps, in a million, is under advantages to know.

This is a state of probation; men are acting for eternity. The Bible is the only book, which claims divine authority, in teaching men how to secure the happiness of a future life. Admit the Bible to be inspired by God, and what consummate folly it is, to suffer ourselves to be cheated out of eternal happiness, by the deceitful reasonings of men, who hate divine truth.

To gain satisfaction upon this subject, we must consider the united force of evidence, arising from the fulfilment of numerous prophecies, and from miraculous operations. Add to this the spirituality of the holy Scriptures. All the teachings of the sacred writings, are calculated to remedy the disorders of the human heart, and to reform the manners of human life.

The unity of design, running through the volume of inspiration, is no small proof of its divine original. All the writers of the Scriptures teach the same important doctrines. All the commandments, exhortations, warnings, and admonitions, contained in the Bible, urge men to practise holiness.



To make men sober, just, temperate, virtuous and good, is the united design of all the inspired writings. Had the Bible been the invention of men, not inspired, we should expect to find self interest to have been the great object of their pursuit. Some scheme for the acquisition of wealth or honor, some contrivance suited to the interest of a party, or some plan formed for the conveniency of gratifying the base passions of the human heart, would have distinguished such a work. But how far removed is revealed religion, from instructions, which lead men to sensual gratification! "Christ is the only founder of a religion, in the history of mankind, which is totally unconnected with all human policy and government, and therefore totally uncondusive to any worldly purposes whatever."

The propagation of the christian religion, its triumphs, its conquests, are convincing proofs of divine almighty aid, in its behalf. Twelve men, mostly illiterate, without art, without power, without numerous friends, without the sword, without the countenance and support of civil government, were the instruments, who propagated the religion, which finally subdued the Roman government. Who can remain an infidel, when it is considered, that Christianity, in its first publication, had every conceivable obstruction? It made its way, in the midst of ignorance, deep rooted prejudices, and the united opposition of civil power. The very existence of open infidels, is far from weakening the evidence in favor of Christianity. Inspiration predicts the rise of such men, as should deny the only Lord who bought them.

Divine Revelation has, for ages, received the attacks of its potent enemies, and it remains unshaken. The repeated attempts made against divine truth shew, more fully, its immoveable foundation: Like the mighty rock, which, planted on the borders of the ocean, receives the foaming angry waves, and continues unmoved.

Revealed religion will live, while the names of its foes will be consigned over to oblivion, or be mentioned, only, as monuments of human folly. Truth will finally prevail and triumph. The words of Moses may be applied to the church of God, in respect to its adversaries. "And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Reader,

Reader, the words of God, contained in the holy Scriptures, are thy life. Thou art in a state of trial for an eternal duration ; thou must soon appear before the Judge, and be judged according to the glorious Gospel of God. Whether willing or unwilling, obedient or disobedient, thou must appear, at this tribunal, and abide the trial, and receive a sentence never to be reversed. The holy Scriptures were given for thy instruction in righteousness, for the guide of thy faith, for the government of thy heart and conscience ; for thy consolation and hope. Read them and believe. Obey God. Beware of men. Give the inspired apostles the credit, due to all honest and good men, and we shall not depart from their testimony, in support of the truth of the holy Scriptures. We shall admit, as certainly true, the declaration : " For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made know unto you, the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his Majesty."

